The “Bradshaw Shift” and Its Reception

Tale order in the *Canterbury Tales*

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Abstract

Geoffrey's Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* were never finished, and there is no autograph manuscript of the text in existence. Editors have therefore had to decide on the order in which to arrange the surviving fragments. In the 1860s, Henry Bradshaw and Frederick James Furnivall made use of the time and place references in the tales in an attempt to arrange them in a chronologically and geographically realistic sequence. This resulted in a tale order scheme not found in any of the manuscripts, but which Furnivall used in his influential Chaucer Society *Six-Text* edition of the *Canterbury Tales* (1868-77). In the preface, he attributed parts of the tale order scheme to Bradshaw. The next authoritative edition of the *Canterbury Tales*, W.W. Skeat's from 1894-97, followed Furnivall, thus strengthening the position of this tale order among Chaucer scholars, and securing it for the next fifty years.

In 1933, F. N. Robinson published an edition of Chaucer's collected works in which the *Canterbury Tales* appeared in the order found in the Ellesmere manuscript. This manuscript must have been produced soon after Chaucer's death and is considered by many scholars to have the highest authority. Since then, the two alternative tale order schemes have been equally influential.

Henry Bradshaw never published an edition of Chaucer, although he was often encouraged to do so. The nearly 130 years that have passed since his death have obscured his role in Chaucer scholarship. In this thesis I attempt to clarify what Bradshaw's contributions to the tale order scheme were, and how and when he decided on it. I also give an overview of how Bradshaw's tale order scheme has been received by scholars up until the present day.

The thesis shows that because Bradshaw published so little, his role is often unclear, and the "Bradshaw Shift" never had a single, clear definition. What is nevertheless generally known as the "Bradshaw Shift" has met with equal measures of acceptance and opposition throughout the nearly 150 years that have passed since it was first introduced by Bradshaw. Its standing today has however diminished, mainly because the question of tale order is no longer a point of discussion among Chaucer scholars.

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Introduction

When I first became interested in the manuscript tradition of the *Canterbury Tales* and the editors who have published the work, Paul G. Ruggiers's *Editing Chaucer: The Great Tradition* provided a good introduction.[1] Reading the chapters on Frederick James Furnivall and Walter William Skeat, one name in particular seemed to constantly appear: Henry Bradshaw. Bradshaw was a considerable influence on a large number of scholars, and Furnivall and Skeat were among them. He also had a strong influence on their editions of the *Canterbury Tales.* However, as he never got around to editing Chaucer himself, he does not have his own chapter in Ruggiers's book, and his reluctance to publish has obscured his influence on Chaucer studies. The only piece of Chaucer scholarship that is linked to his name is the "Bradshaw Shift", a suggested order of the *Canterbury Tales* based on chronological and geographical evidence found in the poem. My goal for the present thesis has been to show how Bradshaw reached his decisions on tale order, how he worked on the tale order question with Furnivall, how the "Bradshaw Shift" term evolved, and how this tale order has been received by Chaucer scholars.

Besides reading what I could find on the subject in books and journals, I have also consulted Bradshaw's papers in Cambridge University Library and in the archives of King's College, Cambridge. In the Archives of King's College, London I consulted their Furnivall papers. Bradshaw's biographer George W. Prothero and scholars like Donald C. Baker, Derek Brewer, Joseph A. Dane and A.S.G. Edwards have all used the Bradshaw-Furnivall correspondence before me, but I include some letters in this thesis that I have not seen quoted elsewhere.

[1] Paul G. Ruggiers, *Editing Chaucer: The Great Tradition* (Norman, OK: Pilgrim Books, 1984).

1 Chaucer and the *Canterbury Tales*

1.1 An unfinished work

Geoffrey Chaucer (c. 1343 – 1400), the father of English literature, holds a unique position in the culture and history of England. Among the first to write in the English vernacular, he helped further the use of English as a literary language. His work includes *Troilus and Criseyde, The House of Fame, The Parliament of Fowls* and *A Treatise on the Astrolabe*. His magnum opus the *Canterbury Tales* was among the most copied and presumably most widely read texts in England in the medieval period. The tales have continued to fascinate scholars and readers for centuries because of Chaucer's remarkable insight into the complexities of human nature, and his many and varied characters. The work also offers a variety of subjects and genres, as well as valuable information on fourteenth century life in England.

The *Canterbury Tales* famously contains a collection of stories told during a pilgrimage from the Tabard Inn in Southwark in London to Canterbury Cathedral in Kent. Chaucer wrote the tales during the final years of his life. In his book, *The Canterbury Tales,* Derek Pearsall writes that "the chronology of Chaucer's writings is a spider's web of hypothesis".[2] Pearsall argues that because the *Canterbury Tales* are not mentioned in the list of Chaucer's works given in the 'Prologue' to the *Legend of Good Women*, they must have been written later. He also places the *Legend of Good Women* after *Troilus and Criseyde*. Based on contemporary historical references made in the latter, Pearsall believes that *Troilus* could have been finished in 1386, and that Chaucer worked on the *Legend* in 1386-7. "The *Canterbury Tales* would then occupy the remaining years of Chaucer's life", he writes.[3] When Chaucer died in 1400, he had worked on his collection of tales for thirteen years, revising them, adding to them, and shifting elements around.

[2] Derek Pearsall, *The Canterbury Tales* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1985), p. 1.

[3] Pearsall (1985), p. 1.

Chaucer never finished the *Canterbury Tales.* We know this because, as Chaucer writes in the "General Prologue", he intended for each of the pilgrims to tell four tales each, two on the way to Canterbury and two on the return journey:

> That ech of yow, to shorte with oure weye,
> In this viage shal telle tales tweye
> To Caunterbury-ward, I mene it so,
> And homeward he shal tellen othere two,
> Of aventures that whilom han bifalle.[4]

There are 34 pilgrims mentioned throughout the text that Chaucer left us: 32 of these in the "General Prologue". Two, the Canon and the Canon's Yeoman, join the pilgrimage later. Of the 32 in the "General Prologue", two are Chaucer himself and Harry Bailly, the host of the Tabard Inn. If all those who are mentioned throughout were to tell four tales each, this would make the total tale number 136.

However, the number of projected pilgrims, or tales, is still not that easily determined. If we use the number 34 that means that we include both the Canon and his Yeoman even though they arrive after the host provides the terms cited above. It also means that we include Chaucer the pilgrim and the host himself, which Chaucer may not have intended us to do. The narrator says early on in the "General Prologue" that as he lay at the Tabard ready to go on his pilgrimage, there arrived "wel nyne and twenty in a compaignye".[5] Twenty-nine pilgrims only make sense if we leave out Chaucer himself, the host, the canon, his yeoman – and one more. It is impossible to find a good explanation as to who this final pilgrim was meant to be. Then again, the line "wel nyne and twenty" could be intentionally vague, and Chaucer could have meant that the narrator perhaps missed one of them at first glance.

The lines "Another nonne with hire hadde she, that was hir chapeleyne, and preestes thre",[6] which follow the description of the Prioress in the "General Prologue", have been much

[4] *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson [3rd ed.] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 36, lines 791-95.

[5] *Riverside*, p. 23, line 24.

[6] *Riverside*, p. 26, lines 163-64. The explanatory notes offer different interpretations, p. 806.

disputed. Perhaps there has been a misunderstanding here, and that the number of priests or the way Chaucer intends us to count them solves the issue at hand, leaving us with twenty-nine pilgrims after all. This would mean that four tales each would bring the total tale count to 116 or 120, depending on whether there were twenty-nine or 30 tale-telling pilgrims.

Nevertheless, only twenty-four tales survive. Of these, twenty-one are told by one of the 30 pilgrims (not counting Chaucer and the host) mentioned in the "General Prologue". Two are attributed to Chaucer himself, the "Tale of Sir Thopas" and the "Tale of Melibee", and one is told by a character not mentioned in the "General Prologue", the Canon's Yeoman. The Canon himself is not mentioned in the "General Prologue" either, as the two characters join the pilgrimage when they are at Boughton-under-Blean.[7] Chaucer is the only pilgrim who tells more than one story. The "General Prologue" and the "Retraction" at the end are also Chaucer's. Throughout the tales there are sporadic references to time and place, though not to such an extent that the itinerary of the pilgrimage is apparent to the general reader. We do not know how important it was to Chaucer that the frame narrative of the pilgrimage would correspond geographically and chronologically with an actual pilgrimage made in the late fourteenth century.

It should also be added that the number of tales required from each pilgrim changes throughout the tales. In the link between the "Squire's Tale" and the "Franklin's Tale" the host says that "ech of yow moot tellen ate leste a tale or two, or breken his biheste".[8] And in the "Parson's Prologue", the host says to the Parson that he is the only one who has not yet told his tale, using the singular and thus indicating that each person should only tell one tale.[9]

As Larry D. Benson writes in *The Riverside Chaucer*, we do not know why Chaucer left the tales "incomplete and without final revision".[10] The task for editors of Chaucer has therefore been to make the most sense of what has survived.

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[7] *Riverside*, p. 270, line 556.

[8] *Riverside*, p. 177, lines 697-98.

[9] *Riverside*, p. 287, line 25.

[10] *Riverside*, p. 5.

1.2 Fragments

Today, we divide the existing *Canterbury Tales* into fragments or groups, typically ten different ones. The arrangement of tales and links into fragments or groups is the result of centuries of research and editing by scholars. Some of the tales are linked together, and some are not. For example, towards the end of the "General Prologue", Chaucer presents the terms of the story-telling contest in which his pilgrims will compete, and then writes that they draw lots. The one who draws the shortest straw must begin with his tale. The Knight draws the shortest straw, and must therefore begin.[11] This creates a link, indicating that the "Knight's Tale" should follow the "General Prologue".

Many of the tales are preceded by a prologue and followed by an epilogue (or both), but not all of them. In the *Riverside* edition, there are twenty-five such links, designated "Introduction", "Prologue" or "Epilogue". These links often contain references to the tale that is to follow, or to one that has come before. This information has then been used by scholars and editors to divide the existing sections of text into the aforementioned fragments or groups.

Different editors have made different choices, but the most common way to present the tales today is the one that is based on the Ellesmere manuscript.[12] It divides what has survived of Chaucer's work into ten fragments with roman numerals. Only one alternative arrangement of the tales has gained enough attention to challenge the fragments and order of Ellesmere. When the Chaucer Society printed the *Canterbury Tales* during the second half of the nineteenth century, they arranged the tales in groups in alphabetical order. There were ten groups, corresponding to the ten Ellesmere fragments, but the groups were identified by letters A through I, with group B being divided into B1 and B2.

[11] *Riverside*, p. 36, lines 835-45.

[12] San Marino, CA, Huntington Library MS EL 26 C 9.

The fragments are thus arranged in one of the two orders shown here:

Fragment I (A): General Prologue, Knight, Miller, Reeve, Cook
Fragment II (B1): Man of Law
Fragment III (D): Wife, Friar, Summoner
Fragment IV (E): Clerk, Merchant
Fragment V (F): Squire, Franklin
Fragment VI (C): Physician, Pardoner
Fragment VII (B2): Shipman, Prioress, Sir Thopas, Melibee, Monk, Nun's Priest
Fragment VIII (G): Second Nun, Canon's Yeoman
Fragment IX (H): Manciple
Fragment X (I): Parson

Scholars have argued over how to interpret the fragmented nature of the text. Fragment VII (B2) and fragment I (A) are the largest groups and "tied close together all the way by links. Compared with these two groups, all other groups are noticeably fragmentary", Albert C. Baugh writes.[13] Some hold that the versions of the text that survived in manuscripts are merely drafts, and that any geographical inconsistencies or other similar incongruities would have been altered by Chaucer if he had finished the work. Others have regarded the tales as a whole, connecting them to each other and fitting them together. Throughout modern Chaucer scholarship there have been convincing arguments for both views. Whether a scholar holds one view or the other changes his or her outlook on Chaucer's great work to a considerable extent.

[13] *Chaucer's Major Poetry,* ed. Albert C. Baugh (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), p. 232.

2 The order of the tales

2.1 Different manuscripts, different orders

There is no manuscript of the *Canterbury Tales* in Chaucer's own hand. Over the centuries, many copies have been made and many of them have survived. Today there are 83 extant manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales* from the late medieval and early Renaissance periods. No other English text from the same period exists in this many copies, which testifies to its popularity.

Since there is no autograph manuscript of the tales in existence we do not know for certain in what order Chaucer intended the tales to be read. The extant manuscripts have different orders, and can be sorted into four groups, *a, b, c* and *d,* that all represent a certain order of the tales. "There are four textual traditions […] besides the text as it appears in several prestigious manuscripts, such as the famous Hengwrt and Ellesmere manuscripts", Beverly Boyd writes in *Editing Chaucer.*[14] Some of the most important orders of the tales are given in the chart below (see next page).

Basing their work on these manuscripts as they gradually came to light, centuries of Chaucer editors have developed our view of the *Canterbury Tales*. They have shaped Chaucer's legacy in many ways, in terms of language, versification and the order of the tales.

[14] Beverly Boyd, "William Caxton" in Paul G. Ruggiers, *Editing Chaucer: The Great Tradition* (Norman, OK: Pilgrim Books, 1984), p. 22. Hengwrt is kept at the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth, as MS Peniarth 392 D.

TABLE 1: TALE ORDERS IN PROMINENT MANUSCRIPTS

	Ellesmere 26 C 9 (*a*)	Hengwrt (Peniarth 392 D)	Hengwrt*[15]	Caxton (*b*)	Lansdowne 851 (*c*)	Petworth House 7 (*d*)	Harley 7334
GP	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Knight	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Miller	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Reeve	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Cook	5	5	5	5	5 + G[16]	5 + G	5 + G
Man of Law	6	12	9	6	6	8	6
Wife of Bath	7	6	6	9	8	11	7
Friar	8	7	7	10	9	12	8
Summoner	9	8	8	11	10	13	9
Clerk	10	17	14	12	11	14	10
Merchant	11	14	11	8	12	10	11
Squire	12	13	10	7	7	9	12
Franklin	13	15	12	13	13	15	13
Physician	14	18	15	16	16	18	16
Pardoner	15	19	16	17	17	19	17
Shipman	16	20	17	18	18	6	18
Prioress	17	21	18	19	19	7	19
Sir Thopas	18	22	19	20	20	20	20
Melibee	19	23	20	21	21	21	21
Monk	20	9	21	22	22	22	22
Nun's Priest	21	10	22	23	23	23	23
Second Nun	22	16	13	14	14	16	14
Canon's Yeoman	23	-	-	15	15	17	15
Manciple	24	11	23	24	24	24	24
Parson	25	24	24	25	25	25	25
Retraction	26	-	-	26	26	26	26

[15] Manly and Rickert argue that the Hengwrt manuscript had been altered some time after it was copied, and that the manuscript was bound in the wrong order. This second Hengwrt column shows what they presumed was the original order of the manuscript.

[16] +G = The Tale of Gamelyn added here.

2.2 Editors of Chaucer before 1850

The question of the order of the tales is no longer at the centre of Chaucer scholarship. Most modern readers of Chaucer seem to have no issue with accepting the fragmented nature of the work. However, in the second half of the nineteenth century, two men devoted a great deal of their time and energy to exploring this question. Henry Bradshaw of the University of Cambridge and Frederick James Furnivall of the Chaucer Society challenged the authority that previous editors of Chaucer had given to certain manuscripts. They saw the lack of cohesion caused by missing tales and missing links as a problem – one that they intended to solve. Their contribution to Chaucer scholarship is most evident through their introduction of what is referred to as the "Bradshaw Shift". This suggests an alternative order of the tales, and first appeared in Furnivall's *Six-Text* edition of the *Canterbury Tales.*[17]

The most prominent editors of Chaucer's texts are William Caxton (1478), William Thynne (1532), John Stow (1561), Thomas Speght (1598), John Urry (1721), Thomas Tyrwhitt (1775-78), Thomas Wright (1847-51), Frederick James Furnivall (1869-77), Walter William Skeat (1894-97), Robert Kilburn Root (1928), John M. Manly and Edith Rickert (1940) and F. N. Robinson (1933; 1957). All except Robert Kilburn Root edited the *Canterbury Tales*. Root's contributions will therefore not be further discussed here.

William Caxton, who introduced the printing press in Britain, based his edition of the *Canterbury Tales* on a manuscript of the *b* text of the tales. His is the first of six early printings of the tales that all have potential manuscript status.[18] The order is given in the table above. The *b* text has little support in modern Chaucer scholarship, but it was very influential in the fifteenth century, which explains Caxton's choice.

[17] *A Six-Text Print of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales in Parallel Columns from the Following Mss: 1. The Ellesmere; 2. The Hengwrt; 3. The Cambridge; 4. The Corpus Christi Coll.; 5. The Petworth; 6.The Lansdowne* ed. Frederick J. Furnivall (London: The Chaucer Society, 1868–1877).

[18] *Riverside*, p. 1118.

William Thynne's edition of 1532 gives the tales in the same order as in Caxton's edition. John Stow's edition of 1561 does the same, as do Thomas Speght's in 1598 and John Urry's in 1721. It is not until Thomas Tyrwhitt publishes his edition in 1775 that the order of the Ellesmere manuscript becomes the norm, even though Tyrwhitt did not use the actual Ellesmere manuscript to make that decision. Thomas Wright's edition of 1847-51 also follows the same order as Ellesmere.

Roy Stokes writes that up until Thomas Wright's edition, Tyrwhitt's was the only reliable version of Chaucer's works. Tyrwhitt only had access to second-rate manuscripts, and yet managed to produce a remarkable edition. Thomas Wright selected the

> manuscript which seemed to him to be the nearest to Chaucer's own time and most free of clerical error. This brought him to the Harleian MS. No. 7334 in the British Museum and he made this the basis of his edition. […] He did not follow his chosen text uncritically but collated it with another, the next in his opinion in age and value, No. 851 in the Lansdowne collection, and also, so far as The Wife of Bath's Tale, with two in the Cambridge University Library.[19]

In modern scholarship, two orders have remained authoritative. The reasons why the Ellesmere order has been so influential are many. The manuscript is thought to have been produced just after 1400, so it is one of the earliest surviving ones. It is illuminated, and contains fewer mistakes than many other manuscripts. Alongside the Hengwrt manuscript, Ellesmere is generally considered the most authoritative surviving manuscript of the *Canterbury Tales*. Both Ellesmere and Hengwrt were first properly acknowledged by Frederick James Furnivall, who included them in his *Six-Text* edition of the tales. The Hengwrt manuscript had been poorly looked after over the centuries, but is thought to be the oldest of all those that have survived. Linne Mooney has suggested that both Ellesmere and Hengwrt were written by a scribe who was dictated to by Chaucer himself, Adam Pinkhurst.[20] Few modern editors of Chaucer's tales follow the tale order of Hengwrt, but Norman Blake's edition from 1980 does so.[21]

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[19] Roy Stokes, *Henry Bradshaw 1831 – 1886*. Great Bibliographers Series (Metuchen, N.J: Scarecrow Press, 1984), p. 14. The CUL manuscripts he refers to are Mm 2.5 and Ii 3.26.

[20] Linne R. Mooney, "Chaucer's Scribe", *Speculum*, 81:1 (2006), 97-138.

[21] *The Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer: Edited from the Hengwrt Manuscript*, ed. N.F. Blake (London:

The other established order of the tales, represented by the "Bradshaw Shift", is in fact not found in any manuscript.[22] It is based solely on Henry Bradshaw's reading of Chaucer's tales, and his studies of the different manuscripts available to him.

Today, it is somewhat unclear what the "Bradshaw Shift" actually entails and how it came to be. The term did not come into use immediately after the Chaucer Society adopted this shift as part of its arrangement of the tales, but was first introduced by Robert A. Pratt in 1951 in an article on the order of the *Canterbury Tales*.[23] Before this, Chaucer editors and scholars would refer to the "Bradshaw Order" or the "Chaucer Society Order". All three of these terms are sometimes used interchangeably today, although they refer to two different orders, distinguished only by their placement of fragment VI (or Group C). It is made clear in Pratt's article that when he speaks of the "Bradshaw Shift", he is referring only to the shift of fragment VII to follow fragment II. Furnivall's contribution, shifting fragment VI to follow fragments II and VII, is discarded by Pratt, who keeps this separate from what he calls the "Bradshaw Shift". For a while, the "Bradshaw Order" and the "Bradshaw Shift" are both used, but by 1978, the "Bradshaw Order" has disappeared, and the "Bradshaw Shift" has become widespread and frequent.[24] However, the shift of fragment VI (group C) is not always attributed to Furnivall, as it should be. Here is an example, from the *Riverside Chaucer* edition:

Arnold, 1980).

[22] One manuscript, MS Arch. Selden. B 24, has the Shipman-Nun's Priest fragment following the Man of Law, but has another order for the rest of the fragments.

[23] Robert A. Pratt, "The Order of the *Canterbury Tales*" in *PMLA* 66:6 (1951), 1141-1167. Pratt acknowledges his debt to W.W. Lawrence and his book *Chaucer and the Canterbury Tales* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), but Lawrence does not use the term. I carried out a number of searches in different databases in order to discover where it first appeared, and Pratt's 1951 article was the oldest hit. The second oldest, Robert F. Gibbons's "Does the Nun's Priest's Epilogue Contain a Link?" in *Studies in Philology*, 51:1 (1954), 21-33, contained the following phrase: "In employing what he calls the 'Bradshaw Shift', Professor Pratt had necessarily to assume […]", (p. 21).

[24] I base this conclusion on the occurrences of the "Bradshaw order" and the "Bradshaw shift" found in Jstor.

> Modern editions differ in the order in which the tales are presented. Skeat's edition has them in the order followed by the Chaucer Society, with the "Bradshaw shift", whereby Fragment VII (B2) is printed following Fragment II (B), and with Fragment VI following next, so that the complete arrangement is as follows: I (A), II (B), VII (B2), VI (C), III (D), IV (E), V (F), VIII (G), IX (H), X (I). Baugh and Pratt follow this order except for the position of Fragment VI, which they print following Fragment V.[25]

It is not made clear here that there is a difference between the "Bradshaw Shift" and the Chaucer Society order, and Furnivall is not mentioned in connection with fragment VI (C). The *Riverside Chaucer* is the edition most widely used by students of Chaucer, and the wording in this particular passage might well mislead them.

[25] *Riverside*, p. 5.

3 The development of the "Bradshaw Shift"

3.1 Biography of Henry Bradshaw

> There came into the room, solidly, quietly, and imperturbably, a short, stoutly built, plump, clean-shaven man, in a serviceable suit of grey. His hair, cut very short, bristled over his big round cranium. I fancy that he had small side-whiskers. His head was set rather low on his shoulders and thrown slightly backwards by his upright carriage. Everything about him was solid and comfortable; he filled his clothes sturdily, and his neat short-fingered hand was a pleasant one to grasp. His small eyes were half-closed, and a smile half-tender, half-humorous, seemed to ripple secretly over his face, without any movement of his small but expressive lips.[26]

Henry Bradshaw, librarian and scholar, was born in London in 1831. He was educated at Eton College from 1843 and then went on to King's College, Cambridge, as a scholar in 1850. At the time, all students or scholars at King's came from Eton, and the practice was that scholars automatically became fellows after three years. They would remain fellows for life unless they married, which Bradshaw never did.[27]

Bradshaw gained his BA in 1854 and was offered a fellowship, which he turned down because his financial situation did not allow him to remain in Cambridge. Instead he began working as a schoolmaster at St Columba's College, near Dublin, where he knew the headmaster, George Williams. Here he discovered that he had no taste for teaching.[28] He returned to Cambridge in 1856, and served as Dean of his college in the years 1857-8 and 1863-5. Bradshaw took an active part in the reformation of King's College during this period, under the leadership of the Provost, Richard Okes. In 1861, the college statutes were amended in order to allow expansion and, for the first time, to allow entry for non-Etonian students. The first of these were admitted in 1865, and the connection between Eton and King's would gradually grow weaker.

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[26] A. C. Benson recalling his first meeting with Henry Bradshaw in 1874, in his article "The leaves of the tree. IX. Henry Bradshaw" in the *Cornhill Magazine*, New Series, 30 (1911), 814-25, p. 818.

[27] Paul Needham, *The Bradshaw Method* (Chapel Hill: Hanes, 1988), p. 2.

[28] Stokes, p. 5.

As an undergraduate, Bradshaw had developed a great interest in the older collections of the University Library. He was appointed principal assistant at the library from November 1856, but soon discovered that this position left him very little time for bibliographical studies.[29] After two years, he resigned. In 1859 the Syndicate appointed him to rearrange and catalogue the manuscripts and early printed books. This work kept him occupied for the next nine years. In 1867 he was appointed University Librarian, and became responsible for the entire library and all the staff.

Bradshaw shied away from confrontation, and knew that an amicable working relationship with the Library Syndics would allow him to choose more freely what he spent the majority of his time on. The collections of manuscripts and early printed books interested him the most, and the everyday running of the Library was not his main strength. "The management of most of the Library's functions therefore fell on the staff", David McKitterick writes.[30]

Bradshaw also worked on a number of different research projects, such as the medieval organisation of Lincoln Cathedral, early English liturgy, the Gutenberg Bible, medieval libraries and the history of early printing in Cambridge. He spent considerable time on the library's substantial collection of books printed by Caxton, but he rarely published anything.

3.2 Work on Chaucer

Although Henry Bradshaw was a man of many interests, the works of one poet in particular – Geoffrey Chaucer – would demand more of his time than any other endeavour. By 1863, he

[29] C.F. Newcombe, *Some Aspects of the Work of Henry Bradshaw* (Camberwell: Privately printed, 1905), pp. 8-9.

[30] David McKitterick, *Cambridge University Library: A History*, vol. 2, *The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 733.

had gained a reputation as an expert on Chaucer. This reputation grew through word of mouth among students, because Bradshaw had as yet published nothing on the subject.[31]

Derek Pearsall gives a picture of the state of Chaucer scholarship at the time when Bradshaw first started working on Chaucer:

> All this time, while German and American scholars such as Ten Brink, Child, Manly and Kittredge were laying the foundations of a proper understanding of Chaucer's language, English scholars were engaged in a radical reappraisal of the text and canon.[32]

Bradshaw's expertise on Chaucer would provide the basis for a close friendship and collaboration with a fellow Cambridge man and Chaucer enthusiast, Frederick James Furnivall. Bradshaw's work was an important part of the foundation for the editions of the *Canterbury Tales* prepared for the Chaucer Society by Furnivall between 1868 and 1877 and later for the Clarendon edition by Walter William Skeat in 1894.[33]

Henry Bradshaw and Frederick James Furnivall first met in 1863-4, but their large correspondence started before that. The first letter between them that I have been able to find in Bradshaw's papers is dated 24 December 1863.[34] Here Furnivall mentions that the publisher Alexander Macmillan has told him about a proposed edition of Chaucer and that Bradshaw has agreed to be part of it:

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[31] William Benzie, *Dr. F.J. Furnivall: Victorian Scholar Adventurer* (Norman, Okla.: Pilgrim Books, 1983), p. 163.

[32] Derek Pearsall, *The Life of Geoffrey Chaucer: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p. 315.

[33] Walter W. Skeat, *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer: Edited from Numerous Manuscripts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894–97).

[34] Furnivall to Bradshaw, 24 December 1863, letter 213, Add. 2591, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library. Derek Brewer, however, wrote in "Furnivall and the Old Chaucer Society" (1979, p. 4) that the first letter he had found was dated a few days earlier, on 17 December 1863. In William Benzie's book (1983, p. 119) he quoted a letter from 20 September 1863 where Furnivall wrote to Bradshaw: "You owe me two letters & don't I wish I may get 'em. When do you mean to send me the Chaucer Poems & the Paper on him?"

> My dear Bradshaw,
>
> No, I hadn't given you up, because I believe in you. […] Macmillan have [*sic*] told me about the Chaucer, & that you had promised to help. I was rejoiced to hear it.

George Walter Prothero, writer and historian, published a biography of Henry Bradshaw after his death. There he related Furnivall's recollection of his first meeting with Bradshaw:

> He was at work in his rooms, in a very airy summer dress, wearing only a grey flannel shirt and trousers, with nothing at all on his feet. In this garb – which at the time was habitual with him – he received his visitor and gave him the heartiest welcome, and a friendship was at once formed which lasted for more than twenty years.[35]

Although the two were friends, and Furnivall was Bradshaw's foremost correspondent for the remainder of the latter's life, they were also in many ways different. Furnivall was an energetic, sociable, Victorian gentleman living in London, married, with children. He was not a Chaucerian by training. He had read mathematics at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, enrolling in 1842 and getting his BA in 1846 and MA in 1849. He had a remarkable ability to finish his projects, and worked at a pace that few of his peers could match.

Bradshaw was industrious, spent his life in "quiet study" at Cambridge and, as noted above, never married.[36] Derek Brewer wrote that Bradshaw "used to get to the Library at quarter-to-six in the morning to do his own work, which was often other people's. George Painter has described him as 'expiating with bewildering energy the guilt of a pathological sloth'".[37]

In spite of their differences, Chaucer was a shared passion. And it is hard to imagine that the Chaucer Society *Six-Text* edition of the *Canterbury Tales* would have come about if either of them had had to do the work without the other. Furnivall brought enthusiasm, energy and benefactors to the project. He founded the Chaucer Society and recruited subscribers to

[35] George W. Prothero, *A Memoir of Henry Bradshaw* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co, 1888), p. 109.

[36] Prothero, p. v.

[37] Derek Brewer, "Furnivall and the Old Chaucer Society", *The Chaucer Newsletter*, 1 (1979), 2-6, p. 4.

ensure the financial means necessary for publication. However, a substantial amount of the scholarly work was Bradshaw's.

Furnivall writes in a letter quoted by Prothero that "(So and so) cares for language, (so and so) for metre, I for neither, only story and social life and opinion; you for all, and that's best".[38] Furnivall held Bradshaw in the highest regard, as he often proclaimed in his letters. Bradshaw, on the other hand, sometimes felt his patience wearing thin when discussing scholarly subjects with Furnivall. In a letter dated 22 September 1868, Bradshaw begins with "Dear Furnivall, what a hopeless person you are".[39] Yet, he seems to have had a considerable fondness for Furnivall as well. And Furnivall could sometimes be annoyed with Bradshaw too, to the point of publicly complaining that Bradshaw hindered the Chaucer Society's work because of his reluctance to publish**.**[40]

Their correspondence illustrates the differences between them nicely. In a letter to Furnivall, Bradshaw writes:

> I look forward to a standard edition of Chaucer's work, which now does not exist. […] I cannot bear the thought of any publication coming forth with authority, when it is merely the result of a few hasty and crude speculations, which a little fair preliminary discussion would get rid of.[41]

In a letter to William Carew Hazlitt, dated August 16, 1867, Furnivall complains about the slow pace of Bradshaw's work: "Bradshaw ought to tell us before it's too late. We have just wasted 15 (pounds) by his delaying some corrections […] but he's a good fellow at heart, I believe, and is doing some fine work on Chaucer".[42]

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[38] Prothero, p. 216.

[39] Bradshaw to Furnivall, 22 September 1868, letter 625, Add. 2591, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

[40] William S. Peterson, "Frederick James Furnivall (1825–1910)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33298, accessed 2 May 2014].

[41] Prothero, p. 217.

[42] Benzie, p. 168.

Bradshaw wrote to Furnivall on 22 March 1866:

> I know people at the universities are said to be very slow indeed in working – but you people in London are perhaps a little too fast – and forget today what you knew a week ago.[43]

William Benzie saw Furnivall as being characteristic of life in mid- and late Victorian England. "Furnivall's frantic rushing about, his insistence on the speedy production of Chaucerian and other texts, and his numerous admissions that he did not have enough time to research his materials exhaustively" were therefore not exceptional for his time.[44]

3.2.1 Plans for an edition

In 1864, Bradshaw began collating versions of the *Canterbury Tales* in preparation for an edition.[45] The publisher Alexander Macmillan wrote to him on 15 January 1864, attempting to set up a meeting between those who were to be involved in a library edition of Chaucer's works: Bradshaw, Oxford Professor John Earle and writer and editor William Aldis Wright.[46] In 1864, Macmillan & Co. had published a Globe edition of Shakespeare's collected works. The text had been based on the text of a critical edition published by the Cambridge University Press. Aldis Wright had edited both editions, the critical edition together with W. G. Clark. Alexander Macmillan had close relations with the Clarendon Press, and wanted to initiate a scholarly edition of Chaucer on which he could later base a Globe edition to be published by his own company.[47] Macmillan communicated with Bradshaw about the

[43] Bradshaw to Furnivall, 22 March 1866, Furnivall 5/1/2, Furnivall Papers, King's College, London.

[44] Benzie, p. 168.

[45] McKitterick, p. 555.

[46] Macmillan to Bradshaw, 15 January 1864, letter 217, Add. 2591, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

[47] *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. Alfred W. Pollard et al. (London: Macmillan & Co, 1898), p. vii. In the Preface to his edition, Pollard clarifies Macmillan's role in both Chaucer editions, a clarification much

possibility of him editing or co-editing both these editions, and both were part of Bradshaw's plans for years. Macmillan wrote to him in March 1866 that "I am really delighted to hear that the great Chaucer is in so prosperous a condition, and very willingly abandon my idea till after the completion of that".[48] A little later the same month he writes that:

> There is no doubt that your decision to do this Globe edition is the right one. No pamphlets or partial publications will do anything at all to give you your right position as *the* Chaucer scholar, and the true Chaucer to the public, like this.[49]

However, Furnivall was not the only person who was affected by Bradshaw's tendency to delay work he had promised. On 27 April 1868, Macmillan wrote to Bradshaw:

> Clay says "Bradshaw has <u>not</u> given us anything, though he said he would." Must I come down & "bang the wall"? I want it done, it really must. You have no idea what will happen if you don't go at in earnest. The Abyssinian Expedition is a joke to it.[50]

When nothing, presumably, happened, Macmillan wrote him again on 12 May the same year: "Clay says you have not yet set him going, which I can hardly believe. I have told him to go & be sure whether he after all is not to blame, if it really is so".[51]

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needed due to Prothero's somewhat unclear presentation of Bradshaw's editing plans. When A.S.G. Edwards wrote his essay on W.W. Skeat for Ruggiers' *Editing Chaucer*, he did not make the important point that Pollard made about Macmillan being involved in both editions. Therefore, it seems from Edwards' essay that Bradshaw's interest throughout the 1860s and 1870s swung between the two proposed editions, when really he was much of the time working on both simultaneously.

[48] Prothero, p. 223.

[49] Prothero, p. 223. Prothero writes March 1866 for both these letters, but also writes as a transition between the first letter reference and the second one that "a year or two later it became apparent that the prospect of a large edition was becoming very uncertain, and the idea of a Globe Chaucer was revived". It seems Prothero is confusing the dates here, and unfortunately I found neither of these two letters among the others in Cambridge University Library.

[50] Macmillan to Bradshaw, 27 April 1868, letter 518, Add. 2591, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library. Clay is Richard Clay, Macmillan's own printer. The Abyssinian Expedition has been remembered as the most expensive affair of honour in history. It was about to be completed when Macmillan wrote this letter.

[51] Macmillan to Bradshaw, 12 May 1868, letter 533, Add. 2591, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University

Furnivall frequently sent letters to Bradshaw requesting material. On 31 October 1867 he asks for Bradshaw's Chaucer papers. On 27 March 1868 he asks for Bradshaw's outline of the tales for the Chaucer Society.[52]

3.2.2 The founding of the Chaucer Society

John Munro writes that it was Bradshaw who suggested to Furnivall that he should found the Chaucer Society.[53] Before 1867, Bradshaw's correspondence with Furnivall concerned the Early English Text Society, but after that their attention turned to Chaucer. Bradshaw's notebooks from the period reflect this, and are full of notes on Chaucer's rhyme endings, pronunciation, orthography and other matters.[54]

Furnivall soon discovered that the EETS, dedicated to "the wide field of early English literature", could not do justice to the works of all early English writers, and Furnivall responded most strongly to Chaucer. There he found "the wit, the subtlety, happiness, gentleness, and sympathy which were aboundingly his own, love of the 'swote smelling flourés white and rede', and the 'pitie' that 'renneth sone in gentil herte'".[55]

Prothero writes that Furnivall told him that one of the Chaucer Society's principal objects was to collect the materials on which Bradshaw might base a standard edition of the poet. Writing to Bradshaw in September 1867, Furnivall said, "The more I think of the Chaucer

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Library.

[52] Furnivall to Bradshaw, 31 October 1867, letter 405 and Furnivall to Bradshaw, 27 March 1868, letter 508, Add. 2591, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

[53] John Munro, *Frederick James Furnivall: A Volume of Personal Record* (Oxford: University Press, 1911), pp. xlviii–xlix.

[54] Benzie, p. 164.

[55] Munro, pp. xlviii–xlix.

Society the more I like it, and if you'd say that you'd help, in choice of texts, etc. and on committee, I should start it at once".[56]

To show his devotion to Bradshaw, Furnivall dedicated the Chaucer Society's edition of *Troilus and Criseyde* to his friend, with the following words: "in Chaucer Matters, my Guide, Philosopher, and Friend, to help whom my Chaucer Work was first begun".[57]

3.2.3 The Skeleton of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*

The unfinished state the *Canterbury Tales* was left in has led to much confusion. Thomas Tyrwhitt's influential edition of 1775-78 had the tales in the order found in the Ellesmere manuscript.[58] Tyrwhitt, however, never worked *from* the Ellesmere manuscript. He simply decided on that order based on the twenty-five manuscripts he *had* seen. As is evident from the correspondence between Bradshaw and Furnivall, Tyrwhitt was an important figure to them both. They put great emphasis on his edition and thought many of his editorial choices had been superior to those of previous editors. We may therefore assume that Bradshaw was strongly aware of Tyrwhitt's tale order when he himself first began to consider the problem in preparation for his edition of Chaucer's collected works. His aim was to arrive at a tale order that was as close as possible to the one Chaucer had intended, and he gave this a great deal of consideration. In 1867 he wrote a pamphlet that he had printed the following year, called *The Skeleton of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*.[59] Here he suggested a specific grouping and order of the tales and provided his reasons for doing so.

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[56] Prothero, p. 214.

[57] *A Parallel-Text Print of Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde from the Campsall ms. of Mr. Bacon Frank, Copied for Henry V. when Prince of Wales, the Harleian ms. 2280 in the British Museum and the Cambridge University Library ms. Gg. 4. 27,* ed. Frederick J. Furnivall (London: The Chaucer Society, 1881–1882).

[58] *The Canterbury Tales of Chaucer*, ed. Thomas Tyrwhitt, 4 vols. (London: T. Payne, 1775-1778).

[59] Henry Bradshaw, *The Skeleton of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales: An Attempt to Distinguish the Several Fragments of the Work as Left by the Author* (London: Macmillan, 1868).

In *Old Friends at Cambridge and Elsewhere*, John Willis Clark recalled that Bradshaw had two main goals for his work on Chaucer: "Silently and secretly, as was his wont, he examined all the manuscripts within his reach, and then set to work to determine (1) what was Chaucer's own work ; (2) what is the real order of the *Canterbury Tales*".[60] In 1866, Bradshaw made a note headed "An attempt to ascertain the state of Chaucer's Works as they were left at his death, with some notices of their subsequent history".[61] Once he had decided what he believed to be the work of Chaucer himself and what he believed was spurious, the grouping of the tales could be considered.

Bradshaw consulted between 50 and 60 different manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales*, beginning with those located in Cambridge and making several trips to other libraries.[62] "Very few of them have the contents in the same order" he wrote in *Skeleton.*[63] In the introductory notes, Bradshaw divided the manuscripts he had studied into three classes. The first class was the one that he believed to be the least correct. In his view, the editions dating from 1532 through 1721 must have been based on a single text from this class. The second class was the one he thought was the most authentic, and the one to which MS Harley 7334 belonged, which was used by Thomas Wright for his 1847-51 edition.[64] The third class was the order adopted by Tyrwhitt from several manuscripts, and which was also found in Ellesmere, although Bradshaw was not too concerned with Ellesmere at the time, and did not mention that particular fact. Bradshaw wrote of the third class that "it agrees in the main with No. 2, but the alterations seem to be all the result of some editorial supervision exercised after Chaucer's death, and in most cases the reason for the change is easily ascertained".[65]

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[60] J. W. Clark, *Old Friends at Cambridge and Elsewhere* (London: Macmillan, 1900), p. 298.

[61] Prothero, p. 347.

[62] Bradshaw does not include a list of MSS in the *Skeleton* preface, but on the basis of documents and letters I have seen in Cambridge where he notes which MSS he has consulted, I have put together a list which can be found in Appendix 1 below.

[63] *Skeleton*, p. 5.

[64] *The Canterbury Tales of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. Thomas Wright, 3 vols. (London: Percy Society, 1847-1851).

[65] *Skeleton*, p. 7.

The order Bradshaw followed in *Skeleton* differs from the one in the Ellesmere manuscript in the following ways: Firstly, Bradshaw treated the "Clerk's", "Merchant's", "Squire's" and "Franklin's" tales as separate fragments at this point, because he had yet to find sufficient evidence to link them together. In the Ellesmere manuscript these tales are divided into two fragments: Clerk + Merchant, and Squire + Franklin. Secondly, he suggested that fragment VIII (G), containing the "Second Nun's Tale" and the "Canon's Yeoman's Tale", should be moved to follow fragment VII, the "Franklin's Tale". His reasons for doing so were that "where this Fragment is found placed between Fragments X. and XI. I have very little doubt that this transposition is the result of […] editorial care".[66] This order is identical to the one found in MS Harley 7334 and used by Thomas Wright.

In the *Skeleton*, Bradshaw repeatedly makes it clear that it is virtually impossible to arrange the several fragments so that the order of time can be preserved.[67] My impression is that when he was writing the *Skeleton*, Bradshaw's main objective was to divide the tales into fragments. The precise arrangement of the fragments, in a set order, came later. He wrote in the introductory notes that "various attempts have been made to bring the tales into order of time and place. This however seems now an impossibility".[68] All the same, he went on pursuing the problem over the next couple of years with what appears to have been increasing energy. We see evidence of this in his correspondence with Furnivall.

[66] *Skeleton*, pp. 36-37.

[67] *Skeleton*, pp. 18, 22, 37, 49. Bradshaw touches on the issues of chronological incongruities on the following pages.

[68] *Skeleton*, p. 7.

3.3 Correspondence between Bradshaw and Furnivall

3.3.1 The first shift of Fragment VII

Throughout the 1860s and 1870s Bradshaw made several attempts at finding a satisfactory arrangement of the tales. The order from which he presumably worked, the Tyrwhitt order (which, as noted above, also happens to be the Ellesmere order) has geographical incongruities, most noticeable where Sittingbourne appears before Rochester. A quick glance at a map of Kent tells us that it should be the other way around. In 1868, Bradshaw rearranged the tales in as geographically and chronologically correct an order as possible, because at the time he believed this was closest to what the author himself had intended. In order to achieve this, he examined all references to place names and the time of day throughout the texts. Most of these are found in the links between tales, in prologues or end links. For example, in the "Wife of Bath's Prologue", the Summoner says "But if I telle tales two or thre Of frères er I come to Sidyngborne That I shal make thyn herte for to morne".[69] Such clues helped Bradshaw place the fragments one after the other in a manner that no one else had attempted before him. The other specific place name references given in the *Canterbury Tales* are to "the Wateryng of Seint Thomas", Deptford and Greenwich, Rochester, Boughton-under-Blean and "Bobbe-up-and-doun, Under the Blee".[70]

Instead of referring to the sections of text between the different fragments as prologues, Bradshaw called them "links" and employed what Prothero called a hook-and-eye arrangement with which he tried to piece the fragments together.[71] The fragments were not always easy to make sense of – scribes had interfered with, or tried to improve on, parts of the text in their manuscripts and sometimes inserted material from other sources.

[69] *Riverside*, p. 116.

[70] *Riverside*, p. 36, line 826; p. 78, lines 3906-7; p. 240, line 1926; p. 270, line 556; p. 282, lines 2-3.

[71] Prothero, p. 348.

It was not until after the publication of the *Skeleton*, in a letter to Furnivall dated 21 September 1868 that Bradshaw suggested the alteration of the order which has later been designated the "Bradshaw Shift" [72] – the shifting of the fragment containing the "Shipman's Tale" through the "Nun's Priest's Tale" to follow fragment II, the "Man of Law's Tale". This arrangement assumes that there is a link between the "Man of Law's Epilogue" and the "Shipman's Tale". Together the two fragments form B1 and B2 in the order Furnivall adopted for his Chaucer Society *Six-Text* edition of the tales. Apart from this shift, the order Bradshaw suggests in the letter is identical to that of the *Skeleton.* He did not offer any lengthy explanation for the shift in the letter. However, he divided the tales into stages of the journey, as follows:

> 1st stage Prologue Knight, Millere, Reve, Cook xxx
> 2nd stage Man of Law, Shipman, Prioresse, Chaucer, Monk, Nonnes Prest xxx
> 3rd stage Wyf, Frere, Somnour
> Second Day
> 4th stage Clerk, Merchant, Squire, Franklin
> 5th stage Second Nonne, Chanoun's Yeman xxx Doctour, Pardoner
> Return Journey
> 6th stage Manciple
> 7th stage Parson[73]

His view was that the shift of the "Shipman's Tale" through the "Nun's Priest's Tale" could be defended as a more appropriate order, because it distributed the stories more evenly over time. The "xxx" indicated that the pilgrims took a break.[74]

Next, Bradshaw spent a considerable time investigating the order in which the Clerk – Merchant – Squire – Franklin group ought to appear. He tested the links between each of the four tales in order to determine which should follow which. He concluded that they should follow each other in this order, but did not clarify whether they should be considered four

[72] Bradshaw to Furnivall, 21 September 1868, letter 624, Add. 2591, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

[73] Bradshaw to Furnivall, 25 September 1868, letter 632, Add. 2591, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

[74] Letter 624.

separate fragments or whether any of them belong in the same fragment. The Chaucer Society *Six-Text* edition places Clerk + Merchant in one fragment, and Squire + Franklin in another. It is unclear whether this was Furnivall's idea or Bradshaw's.

Bradshaw was at this point very optimistic about his own findings, writing to Furnivall that "everything comes straighter with the Canterbury Tales, more than I could possibly have dared to expect. I enclose you a pretty little programme of the whole affair, and see if it does not look charming".[75] He refers to the shift of fragment VII as "absolutely necessary". As we shall see, his enthusiasm would later abate.

Letter 624 does not make it clear whether Bradshaw had discarded the "Tale of Gamelyn" at this point or whether he did that later. We cannot tell because Bradshaw wrote "General Prologue, Knight, etc." instead of listing every tale in group I. He did include it in *Skeleton*, but "Gamelyn" is not included in the Chaucer Society *Six-Text* edition, nor is it listed in the tale scheme in letter 632. And in 1870, when Bradshaw outlined a proposed edition in a letter to Professor Bartholomew Price, "Gamelyn" was no longer included, and Bradshaw's tale order had also been altered (see Appendix 2).

3.3.2 Further correspondence

The correspondence between Bradshaw and Furnivall gives us much interesting information about their working relationship. They would often discuss the details of different manuscripts, for example when Furnivall had been to Oxford and had seen MS Barlow 20. He then wrote a letter to Bradshaw complaining about the manuscript's flaws.[76] Bradshaw agreed, writing back that "it is a bad text as far as order is concerned".[77] Their correspondence also shows details of their access to those manuscripts that are today

[75] Letter 624.

[76] Furnivall to Bradshaw, 3 August 1868, letter 605, Add. 2591, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

[77] Bradshaw to Furnivall, 7 August 1868, letter 609, Add. 2591, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

considered the best – Hengwrt and Ellesmere. "If you want to see the Hengwrt CT, I have it for a week", Furnivall writes to Bradshaw.[78] Furnivall dates it to 1430. Today most scholars believe it to be almost 30 years older than that.

As mentioned earlier, Tyrwhitt was important to both men. Bradshaw encouraged Furnivall to read Tyrwhitt closely. In a letter from Furnivall to Bradshaw, the former says "I've been reading Tyrwhitt yesterday & today, & am surprised to find how much he has of what I'd put down to you".[79]

Bradshaw replied (letter quoted in full):

> Thanks for your letter and its enclosures. The skeleton is admirably done if you had but gone a little further. Not having any definite point in view as a reason for your subdivision I suppose it doesn't matter to you; but if your object were, as mine is, to see how they were actually written, with a view of seeing how the work may be partially reconstructed, you would see that the three most important subdivisions are ignored altogether in your scheme.
>
> When I wrote my notices of the Fragments which you read & discussed last September, I only refrained from printing the notices with the list of contents because it seemed absurd to print so much in such an utterly unreadable form, and I hoped to get the collations done before they could be really wanted.
>
> When you determined to start a Chaucer Society, you remember we discussed the way of printing. You were for doing what you still insist on doing, printing 6 copies parallel. I urge what I still consider the only rational way, printing a manuscript as it stands; only with all the divisions & subdivisions marked.
>
> Once break up the work into its 47 pieces, and give a skeleton in which every one of these parts has its number, & you have only to go through a MS and take down the order in which the pieces come & you are master of the subject.
>
> Had you adopted my plan, it was necessary to have carefully laid down before you start, exactly what division & subdivisions you would recognise. But with your plan, there could be no call for this until you reached the Reves [*sic*] tale at earliest. Otherwise I should have printed my notices months ago. I did not see the object of printing merely to be pennyalined about – & at that time there was no prospect of anything else. When I learnt from Mr Hall that you were at work at the Skeleton I

[78] Furnivall to Bradshaw, 27 June 1867, letter 377, Add. 2591, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

[79] Furnivall to Bradshaw, 16 July 1868, letter 590, Add. 2591, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

> thought I might as well print that it might possibly be of use to you [*sic*] – accordingly I sent my papers to the press just as you saw them last year, & I shall merely put a postscript adding what has occurred to me on the subject since.
>
> If I had a little leisure I could work a thing like this out on the spot, but I cannot do it so rapidly as you at best – so that now I might almost as well have abstained from printing altogether. At least it is hardly likely that owners of MSS will dare to take the same trouble twice over.
>
> My only comfort in the business is that you are at last beginning to appreciate Tyrwhitt. I never could understand how a professed lover of Chaucer could despise Tyrwhitt. It is this alone which has given me that extreme prejudice against your Morris' & Skeat's Chaucer work. I am quite willing that you should think as you now believe that I have been palming off as my own what I merely stole from Tyrwhitt. As long as you will be grateful to him & read him, I shall be content.[80]

Bradshaw writes here, in 1868, that he intends to add a postscript stating what has occurred to him on the subject of tale order since he wrote the *Skeleton* the year before. As we know from letter 624, he had at this time already shifted fragment VII and completed the move that would be forever associated with his name. He appears to have great confidence in the idea in letter 624, and yet is not interested enough or confident enough to actually finish his postscript and publish his *Skeleton*.

This left Furnivall to work out a skeleton of his own. A number of letters between the two show how Furnivall asked Bradshaw to send him a copy of his skeleton and how Bradshaw was reluctant to do so. Furnivall writes to Bradshaw on 6 August 1868:

> My dear B,
>
> So long as you print, I am satisfied. But I must say, in answer to your note
>
> 1 I wished to follow your scheme, not to have the bore of making one out for myself. I wrote to you & asked for yours, telling you I had lost my copy. You wouldn't, or at least didn't, send me another copy, which wouldn't have taken you 2 min to write. So I had to make my own, & found that for my 1st purpose the mere tabulation of Tyrwhitt's results would do. I am going on to the 47 pieces or whatever no. they prove to be: but as yet the groups are not done.[81]

[80] Bradshaw to Furnivall, 6 August 1868, letter 607, Add. 2591, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

[81] Furnivall to Bradshaw, 6 August 1868, letter 608, Add. 2591, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

2 You wouldn't let me have one of your proofs, tho' you know it would have saved me time & trouble, & money too.

3 I offered in every way but giving up the parallel plan to work out your notions, & printed the statement in the prospectus that a separate print of each MS would be given as well as the parallel one. It was you who refused to work with me, or let me work under you.

4 Till about 2 months ago I never owned a Tyrwhitt, nor had I ever read him. My impression of him was formed from what Wright & others had said of his text. You were the first that ran counter to this. About a fortnight ago, […] or whenever it was that I made up my mind you were ungenerously keeping back your plan of the Tales from me, I for the first time read a good bit of Tyrwhitt, & found that he did know his business – except the grammar, say – & that some at least, if not much, of what you had told me (assuming no doubt that I knew Tyrwhitt) was in him. You would not in talking say 'that's T's & that's mine" always, & my tendency is to put down to men whom I like, more than they'd themselves claim. I have never been slow to acknowledge the value of your work, & don't think I shall be.

Your holding it back, I don't like. Talk of penny a lining as you choose, it enables one to interest a large circle of men not only in Chaucer, but in other good men & good work. Had you just been willing to carry on a public with you in your work, it would have increased your usefulness & your power, and saved me & others a lot of trouble.

There, that's over. Of course I shall like to see your pamphlet or essay, & shall work on in my own way now till I get to your results, or some others.

My second table went to the printers this morning ; & soon I hope to have the varying prologues & chats from every MS in type. Then with the facts before me, I shall try what conclusions I can draw.

At present the best result of what I have done is the drawing out of your essay.

Bradshaw replies the next day:

Thanks very much for your letter. Three words of it have done me all the good in the world. "There – that's over". It wasn't till I came to them that I realised that the previous three pages had been an uncongenial blowing up which you would just as gladly not have had to administer to me. [82]

[82] Bradshaw to Furnivall, 7 August 1868, letter 609, Add. 2591, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

He explains that he did not understand that Furnivall just wanted a copy for his own part. He was worried because he finds it "easier to work honestly without having every single step of one's work & ones half-conclusions published to the world".

He then explains his views on Tyrwhitt a little further, and points to those matters that he himself has been more eager to explore than Tyrwhitt had been, namely establishing what was Chaucer's own work and how the fragments should be grouped together:

> Tyrwhitt saw that certain links like the Merchants, Squires or Franklins prologue, had a much better meaning when arranged according to the best MSS than they had in the confusion of the old editions – but he was no where near avowing the Fragment system as a principle, nor of distinguishing much between what was spurious and what was cast off except in two cases, nor of seeing that if a Tale was without a prologue in one manuscripts & with one in another, it was quite possible that Chaucer may have written that prologue afterwards with a view of linking two tales together, which yet might quite well stand far apart in a previous state of the composition. I don't suppose any more genuine links will turn up.
>
> The link at the end of frag VIII linking the Doc to Can Yeo which when I printed last year I thought might just possibly be genuine in part, now I cut out & put into a note as I do the link at the end of Frag IX.

Bradshaw has enclosed a copy of the *Skeleton* and says of it that:

> You will see that I have got my reward in going to the expense of printing them a year ago and now of course they are simply waste paper. I hope you will feel that you have had your revenge.
> It is a great nuisance being compelled to go abroad just when finishing my skeleton. I cannot issue it without a postscript, & they will not let me have my sheets from the press – and I am obliged to start on Monday morning at latest, & shall not be back till the beginning of September.
> It takes me a year to do what you […] are able to knock off in a week.

When Bradshaw hesitated, Furnivall printed. He published "Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales': The Groups and Order of Them" in *Notes and Queries* in August 1868, in the same month that the two of them were discussing tale order in letter after letter. It shows how different Furnivall's approach to publishing ideas was from Bradshaw's. Having, as he said, "been disappointed in the hope that a friend who knows all about this matter would tell me all he

knew", he arranged the tale order of different manuscripts in a table so that they could be easily compared with each other.[83]

3.3.3 The details of the pilgrimage

Furnivall and Bradshaw spent much time considering the realistic details of the pilgrimage – how long the journey would take, which tales could be assigned to which day and where the pilgrims' stopping-places had been. Furnivall was particularly concerned with a specific place name reference in the "Manciple's Prologue":

Woot ye nat where ther stant a litel toun
Which that ycleped is Bobbe-up-and-doun,
Under the Blee, in Caunterbury Weye?[84]

He wrote to Bradshaw that he had asked a friend to "stop down that road, & say what is the most up & down village he finds."[85]

Here is Bradshaw's response:

> Only one little word more about the Pilgrimage. Hitherto of course everyone has tacitly assumed the whole thing to be one day's journey – but if you think even the 40 miles journey to Sittingbourne too much for one day, you must assign Fragment I only to the first day, & II III & IV, i.e. the Man of law, the Shipman-Prioresse-Chaucer-Monk-Nonnes Prest, and the Wyf-Frere-Sumnour, to the second. In any case you will have no need to disturb the order any more.
>
> I am the more inclined to believe the 40 miles journey the first day, & the short 15 miles journey the next into Canterbury not only because Lidgate speaks of one night only at Canterbury, but also (since I wrote to you) I see what is told in the other supplement to the Tales which Urry printed as the Prologue & Merchant's Second Tale. It is of great value in this way as an almost contemporary & unsophisticated

[83] *Notes and Queries*, Vol. 2, Fourth Series (33), 15 August 1868, p. 149.

[84] *Riverside*, p. 282, lines 1-3.

[85] Furnivall to Bradshaw, 22 September 1868, letter 626, Add. 2591, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

> account of a pilgrimage. The Prologue deals with the Pilgrims spoken of by Chaucer from their first arrival at Canterbury one day till their starting next morning, & the tale of Beryn is told by the Merchant as the first tale on the Return journey. You will see that the Pilgrims arrive at Canterbury at mydmorow (which they might easily do five miles beyond Boughton where the Chanoun overtakes them in the morning). They go straight to the Inn – the Checker of the Hope – see to their lodging, take rooms etc. and at once go off to the Shrine in their travelling dress, & are duly anointed by the monks at the Cathedral. This must have been in the forenoon, at any rate not late. Then they go back to the Inn & have their midday meal the gentles putting on a change of clothes, & all of them spending the afternoon & evening to their hearts content, only taking care to get to bed in very good time so as to be ready to start off on the return journey at the first approach of dawn. All this is a perfectly natural picture, and is very instructive.
>
> I have never read Beryn through (it is half as long again as the Knights Tale) but if you have ever read the Prologue you would enjoy it immensely.
> If the Manciple & Parson belong to Chaucer's return journey, there is no need, as far as I can see, to suppose Bob-up-and-down under the Blee to mean any thing else than what it obviously means Boughton under Blee.[86]

However, Furnivall was not prepared to settle for Boughton-under-Blean. He kept the search going together with J. M. Cowper. Cowper writes him on 4 October 1868:

> I am using all means clerical & lay to find out your little town. I tried my friend Thorpe who lives almost in The Blean and he, failing, writes to you! Never mind. I have found the Hamlet of Uppendown and locality called "Up & down" – very much like aren't they? I am afraid I shall have to puzzle you still more yet. All tradition here points to another route & one not yet thought of – I mean between Ospringe & Canterbury – as far as I know.[87]

Cowper eventually settled for "Up and Down", but the *Riverside Chaucer* suggests Harbledown in the explanatory notes: "Bobbe-up-and-doun: Probably Harbledown, two miles north of Canterbury on old road from London, though "Up and down field" in the parish of Thannington and Bobbing, two miles west of Sittingbourne, have both been suggested".[88]

[86] Bradshaw to Furnivall, 23 September 1868, letter 628, Add. 2591, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

[87] Cowper to Furnivall, 4 October 1868, letter 641, Add. 2591, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

[88] *Riverside*, p. 952.

Furnivall also explained in his *Preface* that he was most inclined to believe that Harbledown was the place in question.[89]

The correspondence between Bradshaw and Furnivall shows us again and again how concerned they were with matching the fragments of these fictional tales with the realistic details of an actual pilgrimage from London to Canterbury. In a letter to Bradshaw on 5 October 1868, Furnivall says:

> Today I asked Brewer & Hardy how long Chaucer's party would have been likely to take on the road, & both said, not less than 3 days, perhaps more, & that the poorer people would not travel as fast as princes.
> B. said that Wolay stopped at Faversham to see some grand man or other whom he named. Hardy wanted the name of some King who'd gone there, as he could account for nearly every day of every King's life during his reign. See what Cowper says on the other side.[90]

In the preface to his *Six-Text* edition, Furnivall writes that he believes the journey most likely took three and a half days.[91]

In a letter dated 24 January 1869, Bradshaw writes to Furnivall after receiving a draft from the American scholar F. J. Child on the "Man of Law's end link".[92] He is intrigued by "an entirely new line" which appears in four manuscripts, and which he is convinced is Chaucer's own. He believes it could explain some of Furnivall's "difficulties about the time". The alternative line "Though (that) ye stinte on this grene here adoun", which Bradshaw believes is Chaucer's own, reminds him of the "Prologue to the Legend of Good Women", and makes him believe that it "points to a possibility that in the warmer part of the day, the pilgrims did dismount, if they came to any fresh green place, for the purpose of having a good story told more comfortably".

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[89] *Six-Text*, Part 1, Second Series, p. 35.

[90] The verso of letter 641, Add. 2591, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

[91] *Six-Text*, Part 1, Second Series, p. 39.

[92] Bradshaw to Furnivall, 24 January 1869, Furnivall 5/1/2, Furnivall Papers, King's College, London.

He then urges that Furnivall should not yet print this information.

This letter interestingly shows us that by 1869 Bradshaw has become convinced that Ellesmere and the other manuscripts in the same group are the best ones:

> Remember that this link is in an especially unfinished state & is therefore rejected altogether in a whole class of MSS, which on the whole we find the best. While in Harl 7334 the end is all omitted and at this very point where the new line is found, a blank line occurs in the MS.

Therefore, by January 1869, Bradshaw must have rejected his whole manuscript class system and the preferences that he wrote about in the introductory notes to the *Skeleton* less than eighteen months earlier.

3.3.4 Furnivall's final amendment

When Furnivall published his Chaucer Society *Six-Text* edition it also contained the shifting of the Physician-Pardoner fragment to follow the Shipman-Nun's Priest fragment. I have not read anything that implies that Bradshaw suggested this final alteration, and scholars have attributed that particular tale order choice to Furnivall himself. Furnivall explains his choice in his Preface to the *Six-Text* edition. He writes: "Though I have said that Group C (the Doctor's and Pardoner's Tales) contains no internal evidence as to its proper place in the Work, yet I conceive that it *does* contain evidence as to the time of day when it was to be spoken; and that is, in the morning, before dinner".[93]

He further explains in the preface that

> If then these 3 tales [Wife, Friar, Summoner] are thought sufficient for the 10 miles between Rochester and Sittingbourne, we must make them Fragment 4 and Group C. If not (which is my own opinion) we must bring up two Tales which are "inseparably linked" together, and form one Group, but which contain no internal evidence as to their proper place in the Work, – namely, the Doctor's and Pardoner's – and make these two, Fragment 4 and Group C; turning the Wife, Friar, and Sompnour, into

[93] *Six-Text*, Part 1, Second Series, p. 25.

Fragment 5 and Group D. This then I propose to do; and let the Pilgrims halt for a meal at Sittingbourne, 40 miles from town : – why not for dinner, like King John? […]

When the Host calls on the Pardoner to tell his tale,

'Thow pardoner, thou belamy,' he sayde,
'Tel us a tale, for thou canst many oon' ;

the Pardoner answers:

'It schal be doon,' quod he, 'and that anoon.
But first,' quod he, 'her at this ale-stake
I wil both drynke and byten on a cake.'
But right anoon the gentils gan to crie,
'Nay, let him tellen us no ribaudye.
Tel us some moral thing, that we may leere.'
'Gladly,' quod he, and sayde as ye schal here.
'But in the cuppe wil I me bethink
Upon som honest tale; whil I drinke.
* * * * * *
Your likyng is that I schal telle a tale.
Now have I dronk a draught of corny ale.
By God, I hope I schal telle yow a thing
That schal by resoun be at your liking.'

This bite on the cake and draught of ale leave no doubt on my mind that the Pardoner wanted a snack, by way of breakfast, before telling his tale; and that before-dinner suits the circumstances much better than after; for if he had had a hearty meal at 9 or 19, after a morning's ride, he would not have wanted a luncheon between that and supper at 4 or 5. A draught of ale he might have felt the need of, but the bite of cake means before-breakfast. A (to me) conclusive argument against putting the Pardoner's Tale in either of two positions formerly suggested for it, – just before the arrival at Ospringe or at Canterbury – is found in the concluding lines of the Tale in most MSS, spoken by the Knight,

And ye, sir host, that ben to me so deere,
I pray yow that ye kisse the Pardoner ;
And Pardoner, I pray yow, draweth yow ner,
And, as we dede, *let us laugh and play.*
Anon they kisse, *and riden forth her way.*

This surely is not the way that the end of a day's journey would be spoken of. It's much more like mid-morning: 2 tales told; 3 to tell, and then dinner.[94]

[94] *Six-Text*, Part 1, Second Series, pp. 24-27.

3.3.5 Furnivall's first Chaucer Society report

When Furnivall wrote his first Chaucer Society report in March 1869 he was confident that the Society's work was the beginning of something significant, and was not afraid to claim that the order in which the tales had appeared in the *Six-Text* edition was the true order.

> Not only has it produced the First Part of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, with a separate print of each Manuscript's Part I, but it has in all probability settled, for the first time since Chaucer's death, the true order of his Tales, and rescued his memory from the reproach of having muddled his greatest work.[95]

Furnivall regarded this alone as a historic event in Chaucer criticism. He goes on to list the society's plans for 1869, and remarks at the end that "it is hoped that Mr Hy Bradshaw will consent to publish part, at least, of his Chaucer disquisitions and word-lists, – the results of many years' labour, – part of which have been long in type".

Once Furnivall started printing his *Six-Text* edition and attributing work to Bradshaw through the publications of the society, Bradshaw appears to have become less certain about the tale order scheme he had suggested and even more reluctant to write something on the topic himself. Furnivall once again expressed his frustration with Bradshaw's unwillingness to print in a letter dated 22 May 1871: "I really am always sorry when you take offence at anything I print or write. But indeed you do make mountains of mole hills very often".[96]

In a letter to Furnivall on 17 October 1870, Bradshaw wrote that Thynne, Stowe, Speght and Urry are

> no authority whatever for attributing pieces to Chaucer who died in 1400. Casting these aside, I say simply: I don't know, on any respectable authority, of any pieces of Chaucer's but the following etc.

[95] Furnivall, *Chaucer Society, First Report,* March 1869, Furnivall 5/2/1, Furnivall Papers, King's College, London.

[96] Benzie, p. 167.

> The assumption that others are his is entirely gratuitous. You may believe as much as you please, but please put it as your belief, not as anything else. I always object to your writing such nonsense in print as Mr Bradshaw believes this is not Chaucer's, or thinks that is not. Were it anyone but yourself I should take pains to contradict it, it is so radically absurd – but it is no use ever contradicting FJF.[97]

3.4 Plans for edition abandoned

While the Chaucer Society was hard at work on the *Six-Text* edition, no progress seemed to be made on the Clarendon Press edition or Macmillan's Globe edition. Alexander Macmillan wrote to Bradshaw on 14 April 1870:

> I shall be so glad to see the Chaucer really under way. I had an urgent letter from the distinguished Gerald Massey asking why we did not give a Globe Chaucer. So you see your work will be appreciated in some quarters.[98]

Because the idea was to use the text of the Clarendon edition for the Globe edition, Macmillan eagerly anticipated both. Some of the plans for the Clarendon edition are outlined in a six-page document that Bradshaw sketched out on 10 November 1870 and of which he sent a copy to Professor Bartholomew Price at Oxford, secretary of the Clarendon Press.[99] This document shows that Bradshaw had given a great deal of thought to what he would do if he were to edit Chaucer (see Appendix 2). He gives a table of contents for six volumes. Prothero, who wrote his biography, has added a note to the bottom right hand corner of the last page of the document, stating that the outline is not final. Bradshaw wrote in letter 244 that

> The task of editing Chaucer's works so as in any way to satisfy the requirements of the present day, would be one which I should at once decline if I had to undertake it

[97] Bradshaw to Furnivall, 17 October 1870, Furnivall 5/1/2, Furnivall Papers, King's College, London.

[98] Macmillan to Bradshaw, 14 April 1870, letter 203, Add. 2592, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

[99] Bradshaw to Price, 10 November 1870, letter 244, Add. 2592, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

> without strong support from others who have had a more practical experience of editorial work.

When Bradshaw wrote the outline Earle had withdrawn from the project. After Earle abandoned the cause, W. W. Skeat was asked to step in. Skeat and Wright are listed as assistants to Bradshaw in the document Bradshaw sent to Price on 10 November, and he wrote that he had met with them that same afternoon to discuss the edition. Bradshaw seemed positive that the three of them would be successful.

> […] I am happy to say that they have both consented to aid me to the best of their power, if the Delegates are ready to entrust the direction of such an edition to my care. With this aid I should be glad to do my utmost to carry the work through; and though there must be many shortcomings in it, I could with confidence promise that the edition would show a substantial advance beyond any that has hitherto appeared. I do not think it would be needful to ask for aid from any other scholars.

And yet, time was as always an issue:

> As for time, Mr Skeat always has work on hand, Mr Wright is Senior Bursar of Trinity College (no sinecure), and I am Librarian of the University with work at the University Library from nine o' clock till four every day, so that none of us would be able to devote any considerable portion of his time to the present undertaking. At the same time there is every reason for pressing on with it and I am not wholly unprovided with material, for the critical part of the work. But I do not see that it would be possible to engage to produce more than a volume a year on the average; the first might be more easily so done than some of the others; but to produce anything like a scholarlike edition of Chaucer, time is indispensable. If the delegates are willing to accept this proposal, they may rely upon the editors not needlessly to waste time over the task, but if, as I shall be quite prepared to hear, it should be thought undesirable to allow so much time for the completion of the work, I fear I must give up all prospect of having anything to do with it.

In his letter to Macmillan on 6 December 1870, Bradshaw gave his own view on the status of the Clarendon Press edition. The letter is given in full below:

> Dear Macmillan,
>
> you know probably all about the correspondence which has been passing lately between Professor Price on behalf of the Clarendon Press Delegates and Skeat and myself, relative to the edition of Chaucer which Earle was to have edited, and which he has now thrown up after doing nothing all these years.

Skeat appears to have been asked to succeed Earle, but to have declined to do so unless both Wright and myself had been asked first and had declined. On my being asked accordingly, I felt shourly [*sic*] to tempted to accept, feel that I should very much like to set my work into print, and that if aided by two such practical editors as Skeat & Wright, there would be some chance of really producing a scholarlike edition of Chaucer.

I saw Wright and Skeat the day that I received Professor Price's letter, and showed them or rather drew out then and there for them a sketch of an edition such as I should like to see produced, and sent a proposal to the Delegates accordingly without delay. I hoped that we should be able to produce about a volume a year, and that six or seven volumes (of which I indicated the contents) would be the extent of the work.

I received Professor Price's answer a few days ago while I was away from Cambridge, and I wrote to him to acknowledge it, and to say that I would consider the matter as soon as I returned to Cambridge, and would let him know as soon as I could. His letter said that the Delegates were satisfied generally with my plan, and he enclosed a skeleton form of agreement for me to consider – but he said that owing to the long delay which had taken place already, they were most anxious to press the matter on to its completion.

So far is all preliminary; but I am very anxious to see you before anything is settled one way or the other (for I am not at all sanguine about my undertaking the task), to have some talk on various points connected with it.

I cannot help feeling strongly that to bring out an edition with critical notes & collations (something like the Cambridge Shakespeare) would demand at least a years' preparation to do it well, for a person so tied as I am by seven hours a day work in the Library here. This I am confident they would demur to. If Earle had not snubbed us so grossly, excluding us from all partnership in the editorial responsibility, & from all knowledge of his proposed plan, a good deal more would have been done during the past few years, but that is neither here nor there now.

Again, even with help from Wright & Skeat, it would require the most abject devotion to it on my part for the next seven years to produce such an edition at all satisfactorily – & even then the £ 150 which I might possibly receive between this and 1885 (it could hardly be more for my share) could scarcely compensate for the very binding work of the next seven years, though they could not be expected to be more liberal in their terms.

But beyond all this, the copyright would rest with the Delegates, & it occurs to me that I am already more than half bound to you to produce a Globe edition of Chaucer, which I should dearly like to do, while you could not simply reprint the text of the Clarendon Press Chaucer without their leave – to say the least.

So that it strikes me that I should be much better fitted to produce a small edition much like Bekker's edition of Herodotus, Thucydides, etc with a critical introduction, and a text founded upon a rational collation of a few good manuscripts but without

any array of various readings or much explanatory notes, but with a glossary at the end. It would be an edition which would embody all my ideas about the genuineness or spuriousness of various pieces, and would also embody all the work which I have spent for years upon the proper division & subdivision of text, prologues etc. etc. etc. which has been always so hopelessly neglected by the editors.

I want to be at my sister's on Sunday next, and if you were in London on Monday, I would try and see you about the whole question. If I did this, I should ask you to give me till the end of June to make bona fide preparations, seeing what were really the best texts by actual collation of a part of each, & I might then fairly undertake to have the whole book printed and ready for issue by that time the following year or at latest by October. This seems a long time, but it is far in advance of seven years; or if I resign all intention of working for the Oxford Press, I don't anticipate that even the first volume of their book would be out much before the whole of mine. I feel determined to do something, whatever it may be, & I don't really think you would find me wanting. Let me hear from you.

Ever yours

Henry Bradshaw[100]

A few days later, on 17 December 1870, he wrote to Bartholomew Price:

My dear Sir,

Constant interruption & the press of work consequent upon an unexpected summon from Cambridge in the heart of the town, have not left me till now the few hours leisure which is absolutely necessary to consider fairly your last letter and its enclosure. I am very glad to hear there is a prospect of seeing you at the beginning of the week, because it is much easier always to discuss by word of mouth, however necessary it may be to put the results on paper.

I am sorry to say that further consideration has led me to shrink altogether from the responsibility of a large Library edition of Chaucer, seeing how matters stand.

I fully see that the Oxford edition has been announced just so long, that the Delegates must be anxious to press the matter to completion with as little loss of time as possible – but the more I look at it, the more unwilling I feel to undertake a work of such pretension without a year or a year and a half 's careful preparation, before going to press – in fact that my proposal of a volume a year should only commence a year or a year & a half as from the present time.

[100] Bradshaw to Macmillan, 6 December 1870, letter 251, Add. 2592, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

If Mr Earle had not snubbed us (Mr Wright & myself) so unexpectedly, by carefully excluding us from all community of work in the plan of his edition, & telling us that if we undertook (as literary hacks) to do certain work, he would see that we were paid for it, I for my part should have been at any rate during the interval, making serious & careful preparation for the work, instead of merely amusing myself with it as I have done for several years past.

But beyond all this, it occurred to me after I returned to Cambridge & since I last wrote to you, that I was under an engagement to Mr Macmillan to produce a Globe edition of Chaucer for him. More than two years ago I undertook the work, & type was brought and specimen pages were set up at our University Press in Sept 1868. I was anxious to do it, but I always urged upon Mr Macmillan that it would be far preferable to me to do such a book when the Oxford edition was at any rate partly out, & we could see what the plan was. The two editions could not interfere with one another from a commercial point of view, because their nature & objects were so different (but it was desirable that the results should be as little different as possible)– and so the matter rested until Mr Earle's resignation & your offer to me.

It is but justice to Mr Macmillan to say that the moment I mentioned the difficulty to him, he at once consented to release me wholly from my engagement to him for producing a Globe edition, thus leaving me quite free to act as I thought best. The difficulty only occurred to me less than a fortnight ago, & I wrote at once to Mr Macmillan. But in weighing the matter, I cannot help feeling that I would embody the best portion of my labour of the last ten years more satisfactorily in a small edition of bare text with critical introduction, than in a more elaborate edition, which would require such a large amount of severe work. If I were free for the bulk of the day, I should like nothing better, but the best seven hours of my day being devoted to University work, I am convinced that even with aid from Mr Skeat & Mr Wright, it would be a more severe additional obligation for seven years to come than I could reasonably hope to abide by.

I have here said nothing about terms, because though your letter holds out a prospect of my earning £150 between this and 1885 (my share could not well be more), this has not influenced me in deciding in the least. The work would require an amount of daylight leisure which I cannot give & which no money would enable me to buy.

Yours most truly

Henry Bradshaw[101]

[101] Bradshaw to Price, 17 December 1870, letter 253, Add. 2592, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

A few letters then pass between Bradshaw and Furnivall in which Furnivall mentions a possible Globe edition. On 21 December 1870 Furnivall wrote that Bradshaw had "done what he can" about the Globe edition.[102] On 25 December, he said:

> My dear B,
>
> You can send me no better news than that you're hard at work yourself at Chaucer again, as I make sure that it's with a view to publication. If you will but do your Globe, or anything else, in print…[103]

On 1 January 1871, Furnivall wrote that he is very glad to hear that Bradshaw purposed to do a trial edition of Chaucer first.[104] He expresses his opinion that it was an insult both to Bradshaw and Wright that Skeat was approached.

There is no mention for a couple of months of Chaucer editions in their letters, but on 3 March 1871, Bartholomew Price wrote to Bradshaw requesting his reasons for abandoning the proposed edition for the Clarendon Press.[105] Bradshaw's answer is given in full below:

> My dear Sir,
>
> You ask for my reasons, when I suggest that, in my opinion, it would be wise to suspend for the present the proposed Library edition of Chaucer's works.
>
> The manuscripts which would have to be examined for the purpose are scattered very much, being not only in public collections such as the British museum (sic) and the libraries of the two universities, but also in private collections sometimes difficult of access – To do the work at all thoroughly, this would require a long time, and it would be extremely troublesome at best.

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[102] Furnivall to Bradshaw, 21 December 1870, letter 257, Add. 2592, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

[103] Furnivall to Bradshaw, 25 December 1870, letter 258, Add. 2592, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

[104] Furnivall to Bradshaw, 1 January 1871, letter 260, Add. 2592, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

[105] Price to Bradshaw, 3 March 1871, letter 270, Add. 2592, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

> Meantime a Chaucer Society has been established for the purpose of printing in extenso all the best texts. I see there is only one solitary subscriber at Oxford, but still the Oxford people may possibly have heard of it. They are doing their work with very great care, & very rapidly as well – it is easy to see what an immense advantage any editor would have who starts with all his best texts ready printed on his table, instead of having to waste precious time by taking long journeys to see perhaps one manuscript, which he can then only use for a limited part of the day.
>
> This alone is quite sufficient to make me give up all thought of proceeding with such an edition at present. Indeed I need no further arguments, for I am convinced that any editor would agree with me in this matter, if he were worth employing at all by the University of Oxford.
>
> Yours most truly
>
> Henry Bradshaw[106]

3.5 Furnivall's persistence

When *The Skeleton of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales* was actually published in 1871, Bradshaw added a note at the end, dated 23 November the same year. The note serves as a sort of retraction of any opinions on Chaucer Bradshaw had expressed up until that point, and shows clearly that he soon began to doubt his previous ideas. The note is given in full below:

> Until a day or two ago, when the preceding sheets were brought to me from the University Press, I was fully under the impression that they had been cancelled and the type distributed early in 1868. I came to the conclusion that the remarks were too crude even for such a temporary publication as I then contemplated, and I accordingly had a few copies struck off containing nothing but the beginnings and ends of the several Fragments and their component parts. These I thought might perhaps be useful to any person who had opportunities of access to manuscripts of the Canterbury Tales.
>
> Four years have witnessed a considerable advance in the study of Chaucer both in this country and elsewhere; and Mr Furnivall's labours during that period have put far out of date any work that I have ever done upon this subject. Nevertheless, as the sheets are still standing in type, and they represent a certain amount of thought and labour and the views which I held at that time (since, of course, very much modified), I have thought it worth while to have a few copies struck off, rather as a memorial of past

[106] Bradshaw to Price, 9 March 1871, letter 271, Add. 2592, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

> work than as an earnest of what is to come. Every day seems to render it less likely that I shall ever put my hand again to any work of the kind.
>
> H. B.[107]

No matter how passive or pessimistic Bradshaw was, Furnivall kept suggesting work for him on Chaucer. On 20 June 1870, he asked him whether he would write a review for the *Athenaeum*. "[Norman Maccoll, the editor, would] I'm sure […] like to have it, & you are the man to do it".[108] Similarly, Charles Appleton, the editor of the journal *The Academy,* wrote to Bradshaw on 8 June 1871:

> Dear Sir,
>
> I hope that you won't decline my offer to do the Chaucer: as there is very little doubt about your being able to do it in the Academy style, know that what you say on such a subject will be in the highest sense authoritative.
>
> […]
>
> Write as shortly as you like: but write all you have to say, & in your own way & manner.[109]

After the Clarendon Press edition was abandoned, and Bradshaw started discussing a Globe edition with Macmillan again, Furnivall eagerly encouraged his friend to get started on the work. In March 1872 he writes to him that

> Goldstücker's death, with none of his powers, none of the produce of his work, put into print for the help of others to follow him, makes me write to you once again to urge you to edit your Globe Chaucer at once, and do justice to your work, that people may know it and be helpt along by it. Not that you're likely to die, or that strong you won't see weak me into the grave ; but if you go on refusing to set down and produce your results, you'll leave friends to lament, when you do die, the waste of power in you. You can help, as Goldstücker could have helpt, this time and after-times along.

---

[107] *Skeleton*, p. 54.

[108] Furnivall to Bradshaw, 20 June 1870, letter 220, Add. 2592, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

[109] Appleton to Bradshaw, 8 June 1871, letter 287, Add. 2592, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

> Why shouldn't you? You are something more than a librarian. Do leave a record of it.[110]

The last example I have found of Furnivall's futile attempts to make Bradshaw edit Chaucer for a Globe edition is dated 17 April 1873:

> My dear B,
>
> Two days ago and to Macmillan When are you going to get that Globe Chaucer out of Bradshaw? I wish to heaven you'd do it soon! He said I wish I could. It's too bad of him you write & tell him you've asked me about it![111]

According to Prothero, Bradshaw continued to consider editions throughout the 1870s, but mainly ceased working on Chaucer-related topics in 1873.[112] The letters and papers I have looked at support his view.

3.6 Bradshaw's legacy

Bradshaw died suddenly in Cambridge in 1886, from heart failure, shortly after his 55th birthday. All his books, papers and correspondence were left to the University Library, including an important collection of Irish printed books he had inherited from his Irish father, Joseph Hoare Bradshaw. His bequest also included his private notebooks, which have been described by David McKitterick as "an unpublished mine of observation and analysis".[113]

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[110] Prothero, p. 222. In a footnote on the same page he explains that "Dr Goldstücker, Professor of Sanscrit at University College, London, died early in 1872".

[111] Furnivall to Bradshaw, 17 April 1873, letter 341, Add. 2592, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

[112] Prothero, p. 223.

[113] David McKitterick, "Bradshaw, Henry (1831–1886)" in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3198, accessed 24 June 2013].

"Unpublished" is indeed a word that summarizes most of Bradshaw's scholarly work. C. F. Newcombe provides us with Bradshaw's own thoughts on his struggle to put his thoughts into words:

> Bradshaw had his weaknesses---a failing of procrastination in answering correspondence and an inability to finish things, which often was a source of some trouble to his friends and to himself. Dr. Furnivall once reminded him […] "You like doing bits of twenty-five things instead of finishing one." He was fully conscious of this failing. "It has been my curse all through life," he wrote, "that I want the power or gift, or whatever you like to call it, of finishing what I work at; and all the minute research in the world is only rendered more hopeless by this one failing.[114]

Newcombe believes that Bradshaw's failure to publish was due to his having to make a choice between bibliographical scholarship and librarianship.[115] Once he was appointed University Librarian in 1867,

> scholarly leisure was no longer his. He had to sacrifice work which he loved, and devote himself to the practical routine of librarianship. The bibliographer might deplore the loss and the scholar lament that so much fine scholarship would be wasted in work which gave him little time for original research or production […].

He was generous and helpful towards others in their bibliographical work, although it seems that Bradshaw throughout much of his life showed a greater inclination towards self-study than towards cooperation. However, his inability to produce publications did nothing to diminish his reputation as a scholar. The German professor Theodor Mommsen, Nobel Laureate in Literature, visited England for research purposes and later remarked that "he had been more impressed by Bradshaw than by anyone else he had met on his journey".[116]

Remarks like these make it more understandable that Furnivall should spend so much time and energy on encouraging Bradshaw to write and publish. It seems, however, that the impressive abilities he possessed, which made his work so eagerly anticipated by such a large number of people was also the cause of his hesitation. As Prothero put it, perfectly illustrating

[114] Newcombe, p. 14.

[115] Newcombe, p. 6.

[116] Needham, p. 23.

the differences between Bradshaw and Furnivall, "had he known less he would undoubtedly have written more".[117]

3.7 The two proposed editions

After the abandonment of the Clarendon Press edition, Wright claimed in conversation with Prothero that it was Bradshaw's "inability to account for the wide divergences which distinguish [Harley 7334] of the *Canterbury Tales* from all other manuscripts" that made it so difficult for him to get started on the work required for the proposed edition.[118] The account given by the letters between Bradshaw and Professor Price seem to suggest that Bradshaw met other obstacles as well.

On 27 February 1873, Price wrote to Furnivall:

> Dear Sir,
>
> The edition of Chaucer projected by the Press has fallen through. The proposed Editors have decisively thrown up their books and the Delegates have given up, at least for the present, all intentions of undertaking the work.
>
> I am, my dear sir, yours faithfully
>
> Bartholomew Price[119]

W.W. Skeat eventually took on the task of editing a Clarendon Chaucer. It is uncertain when he was chosen to do so, but Earle's dropping out, "the passage of time, Bradshaw's death in 1886 and Wright's defection to editing Shakespeare would have made Skeat an inevitable choice".[120] Skeat had some experience as an editor of Chaucer already, having prepared a

[117] Prothero, p. 325.

[118] Prothero, p. 225.

[119] Price to Furnivall, 27 February 1873, letter 326, Add. 2592, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

[120] A.S.G. Edwards in Ruggiers, pp. 173-74.

number of the *Canterbury Tales* for the Clarendon Press. These were published tale by tale in separate, small volumes. When he finally did edit Chaucer's collected works, the edition owed a great deal to Bradshaw and he expressed his gratitude to him.

Skeat read mathematics at Cambridge and took orders in 1860. He returned to Christ's College in 1864 as a lecturer. In a letter dated 29 October 1864, he asked Furnivall to introduce him to Bradshaw, and Furnivall did so.[121] Skeat dedicated the final volume of his edition "In grateful memory of Henry Bradshaw", and a letter he wrote to him on 8 April 1878 clearly shows what role Bradshaw had played in his work on Chaucer:

> You have set me thinking where I was before thoughtless, you have helped me to read MSS, you have told me of this or that book or edition, over and over again & thrown out hints (so thankfully received) & told me of points, and in fact helped me, in & out, in hundreds of ways & thousands of times. Your remarks have always been treasured: some have seemed wrong to me at first, but they generally came right […] It is merely and perfectly hopeless to say how much more I owe to you than to anyone else.[122]

As for the Globe edition that Bradshaw discussed with Macmillan, Prothero wrote that after Macmillan and Furnivall had made sporadic attempts to make Bradshaw produce it, he finally said yes in 1879.

> They got as far as discussing the title-page, on which Bradshaw wanted his partner's name to stand first ; some specimen pages were put in type, and the heads of an agreement with the publishers were drawn up. A library edition, to be published by the same firm, was also discussed. The plan of this, as made out by Bradshaw, does not differ essentially from that laid down for the Oxford edition. But, alas! Nothing came of it […][123]

In 1888, the year Prothero published his biography, Furnivall invited Alfred W. Pollard to collaborate with him on a Globe edition for Macmillan. Pollard explained that he started working on an edition with Furnivall, but

[121] Furnivall to Bradshaw, 30 October 1864, letter 240, Add. 2591, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

[122] Skeat to Bradshaw, 8 April 1878, letter 502, Add. 2592, Bradshaw Papers, Cambridge University Library.

[123] Prothero, p. 225.

> the giant in the partnership had been used for a quarter of a century to doing, for nothing, all the hard work for other people, and could not spare from his pioneering the time necessary to enter into the fruit of his own Chaucer labours.

So Pollard had to continue on his own. When Skeat informed them that he was planning to start work on a larger scholarly edition of Chaucer, Pollard decided to produce an edition "on a less extensive plan and intended for a less stalwart class of readers".[124] Pollard's edition appeared in 1898.[125]

3.8 Chaucer Society dissolved

Furnivall struggled to secure funds to run the Chaucer Society throughout its existence. There were simply not enough subscribers. When he died in 1910, Skeat succeeded him as head of the Society. Only two years later, in 1912, the Society was dissolved "after forty-four years of service (1912), having produced a series of texts and treatises unequaled by any organization except the EETS […] The work of the society inaugurated a new era in Chaucerian criticism".[126]

Benzie asserts that two events lay the foundation for all modern Chaucer scholarship – one was F. J. Child's 1862 essay on the use of final –e in the Harleian 7334 manuscript, and the other was Furnivall's decision to found the Chaucer Society in 1868. He suggests that the influence of the Chaucer Society can be seen by looking at the increase in published editions of Chaucer's works. Caroline Spurgeon found that more than 100 editions of selected or single poems were issued between 1851 and 1910, compared to twelve between 1801 and

[124] A. T. Quiller-Couch, *Adventures in Criticism* (London: Cassell and Co., 1896), p. 18.

[125] *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, eds. A. W. Pollard, H. F. Heath, M. H. Liddell and W. S. McCormick (London: Macmillan, 1898).

[126] Benzie, p. 177.

1850. As for full editions of the *Canterbury Tales*, 36 were published between 1851 and 1910, compared to seven in the first half of the nineteenth century.[127]

3.9 Furnivall's own summary

We may end this account of the collaboration between Bradshaw and Furnivall and the work they carried out for and through the Chaucer Society with Furnivall's own words on the subject. In 1873 he wrote an article, "Recent Work at Chaucer", published in *Macmillan's Magazine.* In it he summarizes the Society's impact on Chaucer scholarship during its first five years, and places particular emphasis on Bradshaw's re-arrangement of the tale order. [128]

> It is perhaps needless to say that Chaucer was not such a muddler or goose as the scribes, editors, and critics had made him for five hundred years ; but no one could prove it till Mr. Bradshaw, who had carefully separated the Tales into their constituent fragments or groups, one day quietly lifted up his tenth fragment (containing the Tales of the Shipman, Prioress, Sir Thopas, Melibe, Monk, and Nun's Priest) to its right place as fragment 3, or the second part of Group B, for which Chaucer wrote it, when at once the whole scheme came right. Rochester got into its proper place, the journey turned into the regular three or four days' one, and all the allusions to time, place, former tales &c., at once harmonized. The Chaucer Columbus had made his egg stand.
>
> The Chaucer Society's texts of course followed this arrangement, and have appeared, or will appear, with some minor modifications of Mr. Bradshaw's scheme (of which I fear he has not approved), in the following order, which displays the structure of the Tales as left unfinisht by their author at his death:---
> […]
> On the point of structure, then, Mr. Bradshaw and the Chaucer Society have, for the first time these five hundred years, restored our great poet's work to the order in which he left it.

[127] Caroline Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism and Allusion (1357-1900),* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1925), p. lxxi.

[128] F. J. Furnivall, "Recent Work at Chaucer", Furnivall's own copy, pp. 1-11, Furnivall 5/2/5, the Furnivall Papers, King's College, London.

Furnivall ends the paper by explaining that his reasons for writing it were threefold: firstly to show Englishmen the work being done on Chaucer and try to awaken their interest in the poet, secondly to

> try and draw from Mr. Bradshaw, as well for his own fame's sake as for Chaucer's, his long-promist and long-delayed Globe Edition of Chaucer's works – without which the general public will not recognise what genuine Chaucer is

and thirdly to attract more subscribers and raise money for the Chaucer Society.

In 1900, Skeat rewrote lines from the description of the Clerk in the "General Prologue" as a tribute to Furnivall. In the poem, he makes a neat reference to the Chaucer Society's, and Furnivall's, greatest achievement:

> Yit was him lever, in his shelves newè,
> Six oldè textès, clad in greenish hewè,
> Of Chaucer and his oldè poesyè
> Than ale, or wyn of Lepe, or Malvoisyè.[129]

3.10 The "Bradshaw Shift": Three stages of development

The "Bradshaw Shift", as we have seen, evolved over three main stages. First, the one presented and argued for in *Skeleton*. Second, the one in the September 1868 letters exchanged between Bradshaw and Furnivall. And third, the order that appeared in the Chaucer Society edition of the *Canterbury Tales*. We must include this last stage as the final one despite its not being made by Bradshaw, because it is this order that is the foundation for the lettering of the fragments, and for the tale order discussion among Chaucer scholars that would unfold during the twentieth century. In parallel with these three stages, we can see that Bradshaw, at first so confident both in his plans to edit Chaucer and in his belief that his re-arrangement of the tales puts them in the best possible order, gradually becomes less

[129] Skeat in Munro, p. 179.

confident. In his pamphlet and even more so in his letters to Furnivall on the subject he expresses great faith in his own ideas. But then he apparently loses interest and confidence, and his retraction of 1871 in the note at the end of the *Skeleton* pamphlet dismisses his earlier ideas in such a way that it is very surprising that he let Furnivall use the order and attribute it to him in the Chaucer Society *Six-Text* edition. Their correspondence clearly shows that Bradshaw's enthusiasm diminished, and that he tried to tell Furnivall this. But Furnivall remained adamant that Bradshaw's shift was a work of pure genius.

In addition to these three stages, we have Bradshaw's sketch for a proposed Clarendon edition in the letter to Bartholomew Price. Here he retains his own shift of Fragment VII, but leaves out Furnivall's shift of fragment VI that was included in the Chaucer Society *Six-Text* edition. This makes the sketch from 1870 the only existing document that I have been able to find where Bradshaw himself writes down the exact order that would later become known as the "Bradshaw Shift".

However, as the next chapter will make clear, when twentieth century scholars discussed tale order, they did so on the basis of the Chaucer Society *Six-Text* edition and Furnivall's explanations in the preface attributing the shift of Fragment VII to Bradshaw. After all, the sketch Bradshaw made and sent to Price was written two years later, and was never made public. Besides, the scheme is just a sketch – as opposed to the *Skeleton* scheme, or the scheme Bradshaw made arguments for in letters to Furnivall in 1868, which are both accompanied by Bradshaw's statements on the tale order issue. For these reasons, I do not consider it as a stage in the evolution of the "Bradshaw Shift".

The chart below shows the three stages.

TABLE 2: THE SHIFTS IN THE "BRADSHAW SHIFT"

Order: Ellesmere	**Order:** *Skeleton* 8 Sept 1867	**Order:** Bradshaw's letter 21 Sept 1868	**Order:** The Chaucer Society
I (A) GP[130], Kn, Mi, Re, Co	I GP, Kn, Mi, Re, Co, Gam	I GP, Kn, Mi, Re, Co, (Gam?)	I (A) GP, Kn, Mi, Re, Co
II (B1) MoL	II MoL	II MoL	II (B1) MoL
III (D) Wi, Fri, Su	III Wi, Fri, Su	III Sh, Pr, Th, Mel, Mo, NP	VII (B2) Sh, Pr, Th, Mel, Mo, NP
IV (E) Cl, Me	IV Clerk	IV Wi, Fri, Su	VI (C) Ph, Pa
V (F) Sq, Fra	V Merchant	V Clerk	III (D) Wi, Fri, Su
VI (C) Ph, Pa	VI Squire	VI Merchant	IV (E) Cl, Me
VII (B2) Sh, Pr, Th, Mel, Mo, NP	VII Franklin	VII Squire	V (F) Sq, Fra
VIII (G) SN, CY	VIII SN, CY	VIII Franklin	VIII (G) SN, CY
IX (H) Manciple	IX Ph, Pa	IX SN, CY	IX (H) Manciple
X (I) Parson	X Sh, Pr, Th, Mel, Mo, NP	X Ph, Pa	X (I) Parson
	XI Manciple	XI Manciple	
	XII Parson	XII Parson	

[130] GP=General Prologue, Kn=Knight's Tale, Mi=Miller's Tale, Re=Reeve's Tale, Co=Cook's Tale, Gam=The Tale of Gamelyn, MoL=Man of Law's Tale, Wi=Wife's Tale, Fri=Friar's Tale, Su=Summoner's Tale, Cl=Clerk's Tale, Me=Merchant's Tale, Sq=Squire's Tale, Fra=Franklin's Tale, Ph=Physician's Tale, Pa=Pardoner's Tale, Sh=Shipman's Tale, Pr=Prioress' Tale, Th=The Tale of Sir Thopas, Mel=The Tale of Melibee, Mo=Monk's Tale, NP=Nun's Priest's Tale, SN= Second Nun's Tale, CY=Canon's Yeoman's Tale

I have been able to find two tale order schemes written and explained by Bradshaw, and one written down and not explained further. This would seem to indicate that Bradshaw never really settled for one order of the tales. He changed his mind several times between 1867 and 1870, and it is impossible to know how many other tale orders he may at one point or other have considered. There is reason to believe that he kept altering his preferred tale order because he never found an arrangement that seemed entirely satisfactory. He kept trying, but in the end he gave up the task and withdrew his earlier statements on the topic. Of course, by then Furnivall had already attributed the shift of Fragment VII to him in the preface to the *Six-Text* edition, and since then that move has been inextricably associated with Bradshaw's name.

I think there is every reason to claim that if Furnivall had not attributed the shift to Bradshaw in his preface, the term the "Bradshaw Shift" would not have existed. It seems almost random that of all the tale orders Bradshaw considered, this particular one is, up to the present day, associated with his name.

3.11 The best of intentions

There can be no doubt that even though Bradshaw never edited Chaucer he did for a considerable period of his life intend to do so. The fact that he did not was due to his lacking the ability, not the will. He did go to the trouble of getting pages with parts of the text of Chaucer's poetry printed at the University Press so that he could collate them against other manuscripts, which he must have spent quite some time doing. Roy Stokes mentions that Bradshaw printed twelve specimens between 24 June 1864 and 27 July 1867,[131] and I have seen these among his papers in the King's College Archives in Cambridge.

So, he printed extracts of Chaucer's works, collated them against other manuscripts in a meticulous hand, and kept them in his own private papers. The notes he made on these specimens, as well as the outlines and the possible editions that he makes reference to in his

[131] Stokes, p. 42.

papers show a certain ambition to follow these plans through, and a rather significant belief in his own discoveries on the topic.

Perhaps it was partly the way in which Furnivall so unabashedly presented Bradshaw's ideas to the world that made him so afraid of printing his own views and starting work on an edition. When he agreed in 1879 to do a Globe edition with Furnivall, he wanted Furnivall's name to appear first on the title page. If his name appeared as the second one, he would have less responsibility for the final result than Furnivall would.

Although both Furnivall and Skeat acknowledged their debt to Bradshaw in their editions, and to a certain degree made it clear exactly what part of their work should be attributed to him, we know very little about what Bradshaw's scholarly contributions to the study of Chaucer and the *Canterbury Tales* could have amounted to if only he had shared his ideas with the public. His "reluctance to print" leaves us only with the pamphlet, a few memoranda in a publication of his collected papers[132] and what survives of his private papers in King's College, Cambridge and at the Cambridge University Library.

[132] Francis Jenkinson, *Collected Papers of Henry Bradshaw* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1889).

4 Reception

W.W. Skeat's 1894 edition held a dominant position in Chaucer scholarship for several decades.[133] Because Skeat followed Bradshaw and Furnivall's tale order scheme, that order also remained authoritative. It was not until Robinson rejected the "Bradshaw Shift" in 1933 and chose the Ellesmere order that the scheme became disputed.[134] As recently as in 1988, John H. Fisher wrote that "from the time of Skeat's 1892 [*sic*] edition until F. N. Robinson's in 1933, the Chaucer Society order prevailed, and some scholars still prefer it".[135]

As early as in 1905 Eleanor Hammond suggested that a simple organic union of the fragments in the *Canterbury Tales* might never be permitted, and that the idea of a Chaucerian order "exists more clearly in our imaginations than it did in Chaucer's". She examined the tale orders in Caxton's editions and did not reach a conclusion that satisfied her.[136] Since then, scholars have debated the issue at great length. I will first give a short overview of the most prominent arguments made *for* the "Bradshaw Shift" arrangement, and then give a similar overview of the most prominent arguments *against* the shift.

4.1 Arguments in favour of the "Bradshaw Shift"

Robert A. Pratt's article from 1951 initiated much of the subsequent tale order debate among Chaucer scholars. Pratt showed great respect for the Ellesmere MS and its scribe, and believed the only reason Fragment VII was in what he thought was the wrong place, was that soon after Chaucer's death, before copying began, the scribe accidentally misplaced it,

[133] *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. Walter W. Skeat, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894).

[134] *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. F. N. Robinson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1933).

[135] John H. Fisher, "Animadversions on the Text of Chaucer, 1988", *Speculum*, 63:4 (1988), 779-93, p. 792.

[136] Eleanor Prescott Hammond, "On the Order of the Canterbury Tales: Caxton's Two Editions", *Modern Philology*, 3:2 (1905), 159-78, p. 165.

having removed it from its "Chaucerian" position, thereby producing the incorrect "1400", or Ellesmere, order.[137]

Pratt argued that most scholars who have looked at the internal evidence, seen which links are inextricably connected and which are not, and who have looked at geographical evidence, have reached the conclusion that the "Bradshaw Shift" is correct. He noted that the pilgrim in II b 1179 is either "shipman", "squire" or "summoner". On the basis of the MSS none of these can be shown to be more correct than the others. Pratt argued that the descriptions of the pilgrim suit the Shipman best. Also, both the Squire and the Summoner's tales already have prologues – the shipman is missing one. However, as it now stands the text is not a perfect match for the Shipman either. This, Pratt believed, is because Chaucer did not finish moving his tales around.[138]

In a 1963 article on the "Clerk's Tale", Donald H. Reiman wrote: "If one accepts (as I do) the Bradshaw Shift . . . ".[139] Reiman's article is a defence of the disputed literary qualities of the "Clerk's Tale". He claimed it as "one of the most subtle and skillful of all *The Canterbury Tales*".[140] Reiman believed that the order offered by the "Bradshaw Shift" explains why the Clerk resorts to irony. The shift places the "Wife of Bath's Prologue" immediately after the "Monk's Tale" and the "Nun's Priest's Tale". The Monk received criticism from the Host that he was boring his listeners, and therefore the Nun's Priest is encouraged by the Host to "Telle us swich thyng as may oure hertes glade". The Clerk receives a similar encouragement from the Host. Reiman wrote that

> This advice, which the Nun's Priest obeys very well, is ignored by the Wife of Bath, who seems a "little deaf" in more than the physiological sense. But the Friar's critical

[137] Pratt, p. 1166.

[138] Pratt, p. 1155.

[139] Donald H. Reiman, "The Real Clerk's Tale: Or, Patient Griselda Exposed", *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 5:3 (1963), 356-73, p. 358.

[140] Reiman, p. 356.

> remarks on her preaching and the Host's warning to the Clerk set the stage for another performance in the spirit of the *Nun's Priest's Tale*.[141]

The way Reiman incorporated the "Bradshaw Shift" into his own views on the "Clerk's Tale" is an example of how scholars have chosen sides in the tale order debate according to what fits their own research and theories.

In 1970, James H. Wilson put forward a solution to the problem of the "floating" Fragment VI:

> This paper submits that the "Idleness Prologue," considering the 14C meaning of the word "idle," is the Second Nun's attempt to put the Pardoner's theme into a context which she would find more appropriate. If this suggestion of a link is valid, the order of Fragments VI-VIII is established and the argument for the Bradshaw order strengthened.[142]

George R. Keiser wrote in 1978 that there was now a widespread acceptance of the Ellesmere order.[143] He wished to once again write a "lengthy defense" of the "Bradshaw Shift", as Pratt has done before him. Keiser called it "the most artistically satisfying arrangement of the tales". He pointed out that we have no evidence to prove that the Ellesmere order is Chaucerian.

As for the view that Chaucer was not concerned with what James Dean was later to call "roadside realism", Keiser disagreed:

> the weight of evidence of his abundant use of specific place-names, especially at the beginnings of tales, suggests that Chaucer was greatly concerned with geographical realism. In this respect, he has much in common with […] contemporary English writers.

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[141] Reiman, pp. 358-59.

[142] James H. Wilson, "The Pardoner and the Second Nun in the Bradshaw Order", Program and Abstracts, *The South Central Bulletin*, 30:3, (1970), 111-44, p. 122.

[143] George R. Keiser, "In Defense of the Bradshaw Shift", *The Chaucer Review*, 12:4 (1978), 191-201, p. 191.

He notes the Harley lyrics and romances such as *Morte Arthure* as examples.[144]

Keiser concludes that there is no reason why manuscript authority, a lack of geographical realism or the possibility that Chaucer had a larger thematic structure planned, should prove that the Ellesmere order is superior to the "Bradshaw Shift".

He believes that geography is a valid point, that the "Man of Law's Epilogue" could function as a prologue to the "Shipman's Tale", and that a series of minor artistic benefits accrue if one accepts the "Bradshaw Shift". One example of such benefits is that it "is far more delightful to have [the Wife of Bath] enter the drama after we have heard […] almost a complete array of the medieval stereotypes of womanhood", such as for example Pertelote in the "Nun's Priest's Tale".[145]

A.V.C. Schmidt reviewed Donald R. Howard's *The Idea of the Canterbury Tales* in 1978, and wrote that besides being the most realistically satisfactory arrangement, the "Bradshaw Shift" also "enables the debate on *soveraynetee* to be precipitated, with superb dramatic effect, by the Nun's Priest [*sic*] criticism of *wommenes counseil*, to which the Wife's 'Experience, though noon auctoritee Were [in this world]' is surely the apt rejoinder".[146]

Joseph A. Dane believed that the "Bradshaw Shift" is a matter of Chaucer's "unrealized intentions":

> Chaucer was in the process of moving Fragment B2 (VII) to follow B1 (II), but had not completed this move. […] the notion of Chaucer's carelessness easily explains away inconsistencies in the evidence. And […] this 'intending' Chaucer, as opposed to the less comprehensible Chaucer documented, say, in early manuscripts, has aesthetic tastes that are happily identical to the critic's own.[147]

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[144] Keiser, p. 196.

[145] Keiser, p. 199.

[146] A.V.C. Schmidt, Review of Donald R. Howard's, *The Idea of the Canterbury Tales* in *The Review of English Studies*, 29 (1978), 466-69, p. 468.

[147] Joseph A. Dane, "The Wife of Bath's Shipman's Tale and the Invention of Chaucerian Fabliaux", *Modern Language Review*, 99:2 (2004), 287-300, p. 297.

It might seem, then, that the list of arguments for the "Bradshaw Shift", and against the Ellesmere order, were by then so numerous that they would settle all discussion on the topic. However, there were also a number of points to be made against the shift, and a number of scholars had an affinity for the Ellesmere order of the tales. The words of Leger Brosnahan are worth noting:

> On the problem of the proper order of the fragments of the *Canterbury Tales* critics remain split into those who follow the order found in the best MSS, on the assumption that fifteenth-century editors were in a better position to judge the proper order than twentieth-century editors, and those who continue to seek the best discoverable harmony that can be established among the hints of order found in the text itself. Discussion of the problem by those who have chosen to make use of internal evidence will undoubtedly continue to grow.[148]

4.2 Arguments against the "Bradshaw Shift"

Donald C. Baker's view in 1962 was that there was a general acceptance of the "Bradshaw Order". He noted that

> a leading scholar could, in the last decade, remark casually that every reputable scholar recognized the validity of the Bradshaw Shift. It is hazardous indeed to oppose such a solid front, and to run the risk of being drummed out of the fraternity.[149]

Baker added that the Bradshaw Shift is found in no manuscript, and quotes Manly and Rickert who argue that no manuscript has tale order authority. He thought the fact that a large number of manuscripts have the Wife of Bath after the Man of Law, and the Wife of Bath somewhere before the Shipman, must have *some* significance. He admitted that the earliest

[148] Leger Brosnahan, "Does the Nun's Priest's Epilogue Contain a Link?", *Studies in Philology*, 58:3 (1961), 468-82, p. 482; this article is a response to the article written by Robert F. Gibbons in the same journal in 1954, and has the same title.

[149] Donald C. Baker, "The Bradshaw Order of the Canterbury Tales: A Dissent", *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 63 (1962), 245-61, p. 247.

scribes copied each other, but thought that it would be strange that "no editor or scribe before the Nineteenth Century should have hit upon this logical and obvious solution [i.e. the Shift] which would at once erase so many problems" if it really did erase all problems.[150]

Robert Pratt, as mentioned above, had previously argued that the Ellesmere scribe placed the fragments together in an excellent order, but misplaced Fragment VII. Baker argued that the same evidence might just as likely indicate that Chaucer was progressing towards the Ellesmere order. He proposed that the "Bradshaw Shift" had been an earlier order and that Ellesmere was the goal Chaucer was working towards. Baker thought that the earliest scribes received the *Canterbury Tales* in the Ellesmere order, and that this implied that the Ellesmere order was the last order that Chaucer was working with before he died.

Baker did not believe there is a marriage group of tales in the *Canterbury Tales* that should be placed together. He thought that "one can perceive at least a vague man-woman relationship in all the tales. This would seem to prove, however, only that they were written by a human being". However, if there was such a group, he thought the Wife should appear first, since "her description in the *General Prologue* is the only one (of the pilgrims who tell tales) in which any reference to marriage appears at all".[151] As for the link between the Man of Law and the Shipman, Baker wrote that

> In whatever form, it is generally agreed that the "Wife of Bath's Tale" was originally designed to follow the "Man of Law's Tale". If Chaucer assigned a tale originally written for the Wife of Bath to the Shipman, and then moved the fragment down to place VII, that explains him "blotting out the original teller of the Shipman's Tale found in the Man of Law's Epilogue and perhaps inserting the Shipman's name (as echoed by the oft-cited Selden MS.) to note what was to happen to it.

He thought these omissions in the Ellesmere MS prove that Chaucer intended to cancel them. Baker also noted that "it is doubtful that the opinionated Wife of Bath could be counted on to keep still until her position in the Bradshaw Shift would have allowed her to speak".[152]

[150] Baker (1962), p. 247.

[151] Baker (1962), pp. 254-55.

[152] Baker (1962), pp. 259-60.

Baker's main point was that there is not sufficient proof for what he called "the tampering with the received order of the *Canterbury Tales*".[153] Baker subsequently wrote the chapter on Furnivall for Paul Ruggiers's collection on *Editing Chaucer*. He was in other words a prominent critic of the Chaucer Society tale order, which explains his use of words like "nonsense" when assessing it in that essay.[154]

In an article from 1967 Lee Sheridan Cox noted that those who choose to place emphasis on discrepancies of time and place in the order of the tales disagree on the specific details. She then attacked the very heart of the "Bradshaw Shift", the mention of the place names Sittingbourne and Rochester:

> The allusions to Sittingbourne and Rochester, the journey references which relate to the question of order under discussion, are open to more than one reading. The Summoner's promise to "telle tales two or thre / Of frères, er [he] come to Sidyngborne" does not justify the absolute conclusion that the pilgrims are not far from Sittingbourne.[155]

Larry D. Benson wrote in 1981 that he believed the Ellesmere order "represents Chaucer's own final arrangement".[156] Benson thought the wording in the "Retraction" proved that Chaucer had finished working on the tales, and also that its artistic merit must have come directly from Chaucer.[157] He thought that when some scribes wrote that the work was

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[153] Baker (1962), p. 261.

[154] Ruggiers, p. 166. "in spite of the nonsense of the Bradshaw Shift, […] the parallel text was and remains a brilliant idea".

[155] Lee Sheridan Cox, "A Question of Order in the *Canterbury Tales*", *The Chaucer Review*, 1:4 (1967), 228-52, p. 237.

[156] Larry D. Benson, "The Order of the *Canterbury Tales*", *Studies in the Age of Chaucer,* 3 (1981), 77-120, p. 79. As will become apparent below, Benson became less commited to the Ellesmere order later.

[157] Benson, pp. 110-11.

"compiled" by Geoffrey Chaucer, this is external evidence that Chaucer invented the Ellesmere tale order.[158]

Benson also thought that if someone "were to take Chaucer's references to time as attempts at representing a consistent chronology, he would have to conclude that *The Canterbury Tales* ended the day before they began" because of chronological inconsistencies that place the "Parson's Prologue" on 17 April or earlier, while the "Man of Law's Prologue" is placed on 18 April.[159] In Benson's opinion, Chaucer did not care about these details at all.

As for geographical inconsistencies, Benson noted that Shakespeare, who believed there was a seacoast in Bohemia, had made far greater errors. He also pointed out that there are other errors to be found in the *Canterbury Tales* as well, for example the confusion of the actual number of pilgrims, the lack of clear reference to the Nun's Priest, and others. It is probable, Benson wrote, that Chaucer would have corrected these errors in a final revision.[160]

Charles A. Owen in 1982 reported a growing consensus among Chaucer scholars that "the Ellesmere order represents the author's intentions for *The Canterbury Tales*", and lists E. Talbot Donaldson, John Gardner, Donald Howard, Alfred David, and Christian Zacher as all having accepted the Ellesmere ordering as definitive.[161]

He then noted that although the Hengwrt manuscript is considered the earliest by most scholars,

> not a particle of evidence in the Hengwrt suggests any Chaucerian 'ordering' of the fragments of the text [. . .] The neat pile of manuscript postulated by Robert A. Pratt and other proponents of the Bradshaw shift is fiction. That it could have existed while

[158] Benson, p. 112.

[159] Benson, p. 113.

[160] Benson, pp. 115-16.

[161] Charles A. Owen, "The alternative reading of *The Canterbury Tales*: Chaucer's Text and the Early Manuscripts", *PMLA*, 97:2 (1982), 237-50, p. 237.

> the Hengwrt editor was making his effort to collect text and still have eluded his search defies belief.

Owen then asks a question: "Does the evident improvement in ordering by the Ellesmere manuscript indicate the belated acquisition of a list written by Chaucer and recording his intentions? There is no evidence for such a list. There is some evidence against it".[162] The evidence he referred to is, of course, the geographical discrepancies.

James Dean, in a discussion with Charles Owen in 1986, wrote that he believed most Chaucerians no longer cared about the tale order question, and had realized that "roadside realism" was not one of Chaucer's major concerns.[163]

It is noteworthy that all of these scholars are American, except A. V. C. Schmidt, who was British. However, the book Schmidt reviewed was by an American. Why was the question of tale order so enthusiastically discussed during the twentieth century in the United States, but not in Britain? Perhaps it had something to do with the fact that Americans often had to publish more in order to find work at universities, while this was not then a requirement in the United Kingdom. Derek Brewer said in 1979, in his lecture at the Inaugural Congress of the New Chaucer Society: "May I also, as an Englishman, express my sense of gratitude for the huge amount of work done on Chaucer in the United States, which even in proportion to population seems to me greater than is done in Britain".[164]

There have also been editors and scholars who have emphasized other ways of viewing the tales. John H. Fisher provides a list:

> Derek Pearsall treats the tales by genre. Paul Olson, and Judson Allen and Theresa Moritz have arranged them by topic. John Gardner and Donald Howard find topical patterns within the Ellesmere order. Morton Bloomfield summarizes the causative and authenticating aspects of the pilgrimage frame. C. David Benson argues that the dramatic structure is editorial and the compilation should be viewed as a collection of

[162] Owen, pp. 237-38.

[163] James Dean, "Ordering the Canterbury Tales", *PMLA*, 101:2 (1986), 251-53, p. 253.

[164] Brewer, p. 2.

> contrasting styles. N. F. Blake calls critical attempts to prove the unity of *The Canterbury Tales* inappropriate in view of its fragmentary state.[165]

4.3 The influence of the shift on Chaucer editors

Furnivall's reasons for adhering to the order Bradshaw suggested have been presented in detail in chapter 3. His own addition, the shift of Fragment VI (Group C), has also been explained through quotations from the preface to his edition. The next major edition of Chaucer's works to appear was Skeat's.

Skeat's edition was published in six volumes between 1894 and 1897 and followed the order of the Chaucer Society. However, Skeat wrote that he believed that only the shift made by Bradshaw was correct. Of Furnivall's contribution, he wrote: "I think that no good has been effected by it. I have been obliged to follow suit, but I wish to make a note that the right order of the Groups is A B D E F C G H I".[166]

A few years later, in 1907, the Chaucer Society published a text by Skeat that showed he had given up the attempt to discover a Chaucerian tale order since he published his edition. He wrote of the tale order and the geographical inconsistencies that

> the simplest, and I believe the only true way, is to admit the fact [of the geographical incongruities] and leave it. I do not doubt that Chaucer could easily have set it right; but, if we are to go by the evidence, it is obvious that he never even attempted it.[167]

Skeat's Oxford edition remained the authoritative one until F.N. Robinson published the first edition of the *Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* in 1933. Robinson rejected the "Bradshaw Shift" in favour of the Ellesmere order, and consequently, in the words of J.S.P. Tatlock, who reviewed his edition, clashed "with most of the recent editions, and a vast

[165] Fisher (1988), p. 792.

[166] Skeat, vol. 3, p. 434.

[167] W.W. Skeat, *Evolution of the Canterbury Tales* (London: Chaucer Society, 1907), p. 30.

literature for sixty years".[168] John M. Manly had done the same when he published selections of the tales in 1928, a decision that in my view may well have influenced Robinson.[169] Tatlock incidentally disagreed with Robinson's decision because he thought the Ellesmere order was no more satisfying than Bradshaw and Furnivall's suggestions. Though Robinson chose the Ellesmere order, he did believe the "Bradshaw Shift" was what Chaucer had intended, but he wished to follow the best manuscripts without an attempt "to correct discrepancies left standing by the author".[170]

The next edition which had a lasting impact on Chaucer scholarship was that of Manly and Edith Rickert, published in 1940. This too followed the Ellesmere order. Manly and Rickert believed the Ellesmere order to be editorial:

> Some scholars have attempted to establish a few typical arrangements as having been made by Chaucer and to derive one of these from another. Inasmuch as the evidence of the MSS seems to show clearly that Chaucer was not responsible for any of the extant arrangements, there is no reason to discuss the arguments of previous scholars as to his reasons for changes. That Chaucer cannot be held responsible for any one of the arrangements in the MSS seems perfectly clear […] It was long ago pointed out that Chaucer cannot have been responsible for placing the tales forming Block B2 after those forming Block D, for in B2 line 3116 reads, "Lo Rouchestre stant heer faste by", whereas in D 845-48 the Summoner promises to tell two or three stories of friars before they come to "Sittingbourne", which lies some eleven miles beyond Rochester. Moreover, it is incredible that after placing the telling of the Manciple's short tale in the morning (cf. H 15-17) Chaucer should represent the hour of the day at the close of it as four in the afternoon (I 1-5). We may therefore dismiss the El arrangement as non-Chaucerian. On the other hand, it is clear that Chaucer cannot be held responsible for any of the arrangements which have the misplaced and modified links.[171]

[168] J. S. P. Tatlock, Review of F. N. Robinson's *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, *Speculum*, 9:4 (1934), 459-64, p. 464.

[169] *Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. John M. Manly (London: Harrap, 1928).

[170] *Riverside*, p. 5.

[171] *The Text of the Canterbury Tales: Studied on the Basis of All Known Manuscripts*, eds. John M. Manly and Edith Rickert, 8 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940), vol 2, p. 475.

Then follows their account of the references to time, and why A must come first, to be followed by B1. B2, with its allusions to Rochester, must come before D, with its allusions to Sittingbourne.[172] Block B2 does not necessarily connect with B1 (they believed that the Man of Law head link was made for another tale than the "Man of Law's Tale", one not now extant). Their discussion of the number of tales and days and how the tales are divided between the days, ends with the following statement:

> But certainly the question of the number of days occupied by the pilgrimage is a matter of very small consequence, since the whole conception of a series of tales told while riding by so large a group of pilgrims is, however entertaining, entirely unrealistic.[173]

According to Manly and Rickert, the manuscripts only show us that

> none of the extant MSS exhibits an arrangement which with any probability can be assigned to Chaucer […] Very soon after Chaucer's death several separate attempts were made at gathering the tales that Chaucer was known or reported to have written.[174]

F. N. Robinson published a second, revised, edition in 1957, and still followed Ellesmere. When E. Talbot Donaldson published his edition in 1958, he too followed Ellesmere. His revised edition of 1975 did the same.

Albert C. Baugh published an edition in 1963. He gave the tales in the "Bradshaw Shift" order with the fragments and their roman numerals in brackets. This edition has been widely used in US colleges alongside those of Robinson and Donaldson and John Fisher's edition from 1977 (see below). In Baugh's view the Chaucer Society order "gives a highly satisfactory sequence in all respects except as to the position which [Furnivall] assigned to the Physician-Pardoner pair (Group C), which he placed, on very slender grounds, after *The Nun's Priest's Tale*".[175] He elaborated on the placement of this fragment:

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[172] Manly and Rickert, pp. 489-94.

[173] Manly and Rickert, p. 494.

[174] Manly and Rickert, p. 489.

[175] Baugh, p. 231.

> The most difficult group to place is Group C (Physician-Pardoner) because it is without any reference to time or place except the not very helpful remark of the Pardoner that before he tells his tale he must stop for a draught of ale and a bite of cake. […] One cannot but be impressed by the quality and number of the manuscripts in which this group immediately precedes the group that begins with *The Shipman's Tale* (Group B2), and over a dozen manuscripts of what is called the *d* type contain a spurious link connecting the two groups. If CB2 could be considered a unit, it could be argued that it should be placed as a unit, and some scholars (Koch, Moore, and at one time Manly) have suggested a position immediately after *The Man of Law's Tale* (B1). But this involves difficulties. Also, in manuscripts regarded as the best (including Ellesmere) CB2 consistently follows *The Franklin's Tale*. This arrangement results in the dislocation of the reference in B2 to Rochester. It would seem best to regard the close association of C and B2 as due to an early scribe, and to try to place each of these fragments separately. Since there is reason for placing B2 before the Wife of Bath's Prologue, and since C causes no difficulty if left to occupy the position after *The Franklin's Tale*, where it is found in excellent manuscripts, that is where it is placed in the present edition.[176]

When Robert Pratt published an edition called *The Tales of Canterbury* in 1974 he chose, not surprisingly, to follow the "Bradshaw Shift".

John H. Fisher's edition *The Complete Poetry and Prose of Geoffrey Chaucer*, which appeared in 1977, follows Ellesmere.

Norman Blake's edition from 1980 stands out from the others in his decision to follow the order found in the Hengwrt manuscript:

> Chaucer changed his mind about the poem as it progressed and he cannot be saddled with one definitive order from references which were added at various times. Perhaps he would have tidied up these references if the poem had been finished and published. The question of order is less important than many scholars think. Of much greater importance is the problem of how many fragments were in existence at Chaucer's death.[177]

[176] Baugh, p. 232.

[177] Blake, p. 3.

Blake then goes on to abandon the fragment/group systems in favour of his own invention, twelve sections. Blake's decision to follow the Hengwrt order of the tales has not influenced subsequent editions.

In 1987, the *Riverside Chaucer* was published, with Larry D. Benson as its general editor. This edition is the most recent scholarly edition of Chaucer's works. It builds on Robinson's two editions, and Leger Brosnahan noted in a review that

> Robinson's choices are usually respected, occasionally against the editors' convictions. The Ellesmere order, convincingly defended by Benson in *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* (1981), seems less strongly supported in this edition though still chosen.[178]

Baker wrote in 1981 that the "new" Robinson (i.e. the *Riverside* edition), "will presumably follow the Bradshaw order of Pratt's edition of *The Tales of Canterbury* (1966)".[179] The reason for his assumption was that the *Riverside* edition was begun by Pratt. Benson later took over and Pratt became advisory text editor.[180] Benson wrote in the introductory notes that

> Robinson chose that order even though he believed it probable that the 'Bradshaw shift' was indeed what Chaucer intended; nevertheless, he wrote, 'in the present edition the inconsistent arrangement of the best manuscripts' (by which he means the Ellesmere and related manuscripts) 'is followed and no attempt is made to correct discrepancies left standing by the author.'[181]

In the textual notes, Benson wrote that when one considers the problem of the order of the tales, one should avoid

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[178] Leger Brosnahan, Review of Larry D. Benson (ed.), *The Riverside Chaucer*, *Speculum*, 63:3 (1988), 641-45, p. 644.

[179] Donald C. Baker, "The Evolution of Henry Bradshaw's Idea of the Order of the Canterbury Tales", *The Chaucer Newsletter*, 3:1 (1981), 2-6, p. 6.

[180] Brosnahan (1988), pp. 641-42.

[181] *Riverside*, p. 5.

> two extreme views […] : (a) that Chaucer left the Tales in a clear order, and (b) that Chaucer left the Tales in a completely disordered state […] It is entirely possible that Chaucer expected to clean up his messy details, such as the place-name references, in a final revision that he was never able to carry out. Barring new evidence, the view that no authorial order ever existed seems difficult to sustain […] The opposite view, that Chaucer had a definite order in mind, seems equally subject to question. Such a view […] speaks to aesthetic values but not necessarily to values that are authorial. That is, the order that emerges as 'Chaucerian' is not necessarily Chaucer's.[182]

It is clear that Benson here was either refraining from expressing his opinions on the Ellesmere order's superiority, or had become less enthusiastic about the idea in the six years that had passed between the publication of his 1981 article and the *Riverside* edition.

In the table below, I compare the tale order of all major scholarly editions of the *Canterbury Tales* published after Bradshaw's shift was introduced. I have also included a section for popular editions. I selected the latter primarily on the basis of distribution. The selection is fairly representative for the tale orders that can be found in editions like these.

As it turned out that some editions follow the Chaucer Society order and some only the "Bradshaw Shift", I have made separate columns for these two. I have also made a column for those editions that follow Ellesmere. The only scholarly edition that does not follow one of these three tale order schemes is Blake's from 1980. It is possible that there are popular editions with entirely different tale order schemes than the ones included in this table, but I think it is fair to assume that the majority of them follow either Ellesmere, the Chaucer Society or Bradshaw. I have also included a column for those editions that follow the Ellesmere order, but provide the Chaucer Society lettering in parentheses after the roman numerals used for the Ellesmere order.

As the chart shows, four scholarly editions follow the "Bradshaw Shift" or the Chaucer Society order, two of each. Two follow the Ellesmere order, but give the Chaucer Society order in brackets. Three follow the Ellesmere order. One follows the order found in the Hengwrt manuscript.

[182] *Riverside*, p. 1121.

TABLE 3: A SELECTION OF MODERN EDITIONS OF CHAUCER

Edition	Follows the Ellesmere order	Follows the Ellesmere order, but gives Chaucer Society letters in parentheses	Follows the Chaucer Society order	Follows the Bradshaw Shift
Scholarly editions				
Skeat 1894-7			X	
Pollard 1898			X	
Robinson 1933/1957	X			
Manly & Rickert 1940		X		
Talbot Donaldson 1958/1975	X			
Baugh 1963				X
Pratt 1974				X
Fisher 1977	X			
Blake 1980 (Hengwrt)	-	-	-	-
Benson 1987		X		
Popular editions				
Oxford World's Classics // 2011		X		
Penguin Classics Middle English edition // 2005		X		
Penguin Classics Modern English edition // 2003			X	
Everyman's library // 1992		X		
Penguin Classics Deluxe // 2010	X			
Vintage Classics // 2011			X	
Hackett // 2005	X			
Modern Library // 2009	X			

Three popular editions follow the Ellesmere order. Two follow the Chaucer Society order. Three follow the Ellesmere order, but give the Chaucer Society order in brackets. The 2008 edition of the Oxford World's Classics edition followed the "Bradshaw Shift", but the most recent edition from 2011 follows Ellesmere. None of the popular editions listed here follow the "Bradshaw Shift".

The chart shows that the distribution is fairly even between the Ellesmere and the "Bradshaw Shift"/Chaucer Society orders. There is no major difference between scholarly editions and popular editions, or any clear chronological divide that marks a transition from one tale order tradition to another. The reason that there is no popular edition that follows the "Bradshaw Shift" as separate from the Chaucer Society order might be that any decision to alter the alphabetic arrangement from the *Six-Text* edition is more likely to happen if the editor has spent some time considering the order of the tales. It might be more likely that an editor of a scholarly edition would consider that problem.

It is in itself an achievement by Henry Bradshaw and the Chaucer Society that their order(s) of the tales has remained the only alternative to the Ellesmere order, given that Ellesmere is regarded as one of the most authoritative manuscripts, that Tyrwhitt's monumental edition followed the same order, and that there is no manuscript evidence to support their scheme. No manuscripts follow the "Bradshaw Shift" or the Chaucer Society order, and yet they have made just as big an impact on subsequent scholars and editors of the *Canterbury Tales* as the Ellesmere order has done.

It is even more fascinating that the "Bradshaw Shift" has achieved the circulation and status that it has today, if one considers its history. Bradshaw had doubts when conceiving his tale order scheme, it has received considerable criticism from scholars throughout the twentieth century, and the term does not have a single, clear definition.

Today, very few readers or scholars even care in which order the tales were intended to have appeared, because they know that the work was left unfinished by the author – and that is all the information they need. They accept the *Canterbury Tales*' unfinished state, and do not find the order of the tales an interesting question. Derek Pearsall writes:

> It is doubtful whether it can be improved upon as a hypothesis concerning what Chaucer would have done with the fragments if he had been given a few hours and told to put his papers in order. Even if Chaucer could be asked to come back and do this, the order so arrived at would not represent his 'intentions', since those intentions are unrealized in the unfinished work as he left it and as we have it. All orderings of the *Tales* are therefore provisional and merely pragmatic.[183]

The "Bradshaw Shift" is not a perfect explanation, but there are no other tale orders that offer explanations for all possible incongruities either. And the two men who believed the question was worth looking into more than 150 years ago made such a strong case in their favour that succeeding editors and scholars were sufficiently convinced, and have kept their scholarly endeavours alive throughout the twentieth century.

One final point should perhaps be made: It is unfortunate that Bradshaw's unpublished papers have not been collected and made available to the public. The reasons why this has not happened could be many, but Bradshaw published so little and we have so little information about him and his interests that it may have been difficult to make a case for a collection of his papers. It could also be challenging to secure the funding necessary for such a project, but it might be worth the effort.

[183] Pearsall (1985), p. 21.

Postscript

When I was planning my visit to Cambridge, I was in touch with the University Library, and I was given to understand that their Janus database gave an overview of the collections of Bradshaw's papers kept there. On checking it I found that most of the letters concerning Bradshaw's Chaucer work and much of his correspondence with Furnivall was filed in MSS Add. 2591 and Add. 2592. In addition, I looked at the registers for the other Additional Manuscripts that contain parts of his correspondence. They provided the names of the sender and the recipient, so I could check whether these collections contained letters that I ought to look at, but none appeared to do so.

On this basis I consulted the letters that appeared relevant, but after my return, when I was writing this up, I became increasingly puzzled. In the Bradshaw papers kept in the King's College Archives, I had found a letter from Prothero, Bradshaw's biographer, to Charles Grant, then Bursar of King's College:

> Dear Grant,
>
> I have taken the liberty of depositing in the room under the Library 1) a long cardboard box containing a number of letters from or to H.B. Some being copies and some originals ; also a number of scraps from his writing, draft letters etc, which I made use of for my memoir.[184]

I had assumed that most of these letters had then gone from the College to the University Library, but Prothero cites some that I did not find among Bradshaw's papers at the UL or in his paper's in the King's College Archives. His correspondence is stored in chronological order. Each letter is numbered, and there was no gap in the numbering where some of these items should have been. On inquiring I was informed by the University Library that the numbering had been done in the 1950s or 1960s.[185]

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[184] Prothero to Grant, 20 July 1889, BRA/2/77, Bradshaw Papers, King's College Archives, Cambridge.

[185] "Add. 2591 and 2592 were numbered in the 1950s or 1960s and […] it is not possible for me to say exactly by whom. Librarians at the University Library at this time were all taught to write in 'Library hand' and therefore the writing is similar whoever was doing the cataloguing". E-mail from Frank Bowles, Superintendent of the Manuscripts Reading Room at Cambridge University Library, 9 September 2014.

I then found an article by A. E. B. Owen from 1999, "Henry Bradshaw and his Correspondents", where he explained that the treatment of Bradshaw's papers had been surprisingly casual. He recalled joining the University Library staff in 1947, and that there was still a chest of Bradshaw's unsorted papers outside the Librarian's office at that time. Owen wrote that "what can be learnt from the register of accessions to the Additional Manuscripts series suggests that over the years random instalments of the papers were removed from the chest for incorporation into the series, on no obvious system".[186] Prothero wrote in the preface to his Bradshaw memoir that

> I have only to add that I should have incorporated more of Henry Bradshaw's letters and unpublished work in this memoir, but for two reasons. In the first place, such an addition would have enlarged the volume to an excessive bulk ; and, in the second, a collective edition of his published papers will shortly be issued, to which it is hoped that a volume of his letters on scientific and literary subjects may subsequently be added.[187]

Owen suggested that perhaps the letters in MSS Add. 2591 and Add. 2592 were the beginning of a selection for a publication of Bradshaw's letters, and that these Additional Manuscripts received their classmark during Francis Jenkinson's librarianship. It was Jenkinson who published the collective edition of Bradshaw's published papers (which did not include correspondence).

Owen also mentioned that he himself had spent time cataloguing MS Add. 8916, which he said contained the majority of Bradshaw's correspondence. I could not recall finding this classmark in Janus when I was preparing to visit Cambridge or when I was there. Once again, an explanation was provided by e-mail: "The majority of Add. 8916 is unfortunately currently uncatalogued which is why it does not appear in Janus".[188]

It may well be that the bulk of Bradshaw's correspondence with Furnivall and others concerning Chaucer are now found in MSS Add. 2591 and MS Add. 2592, but I would have

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[186] A. E. B. Owen, "Henry Bradshaw and his Correspondence", *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 11:4 (1999), 480-96, p. 480-81.

[187] Prothero, p. vii.

[188] E-mail from Frank Bowles, 4 November 2014.

preferred to have made certain of this myself. In my view it would be in the interest of Chaucer scholarship if the University Library would allocate resources to have MS Add. 8916 catalogued.

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508: Furnivall to Bradshaw, 27 March 1868.
518: Macmillan to Bradshaw, 27 April 1868.
533: Macmillan to Bradshaw, 12 May 1868.
590: Furnivall to Bradshaw, 16 July 1868.
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608: Furnivall to Bradshaw, 6 August 1868.
609: Bradshaw to Furnivall, 7 August 1868.
624: Bradshaw to Furnivall, 21 September 1868.
625: Bradshaw to Furnivall, 22 September 1868.
626: Furnivall to Bradshaw, 22 September 1868.
628: Bradshaw to Furnivall, 23 September 1868.
632: Bradshaw to Furnivall, 25 September 1868.
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203: Macmillan to Bradshaw, 14 April 1870.
220: Furnivall to Bradshaw, 20 June 1870.
244: Bradshaw to Price, 10 November 1870.
251: Bradshaw to Macmillan, 6 December 1870.

253: Bradshaw to Price, 17 December 1870.

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258: Furnivall to Bradshaw, 25 December.

260: Furnivall to Bradshaw, 1 January 1871.

270: Price to Bradshaw, 3 March 1871.

271: Bradshaw to Price, 9 March 1871.

287: Appleton to Bradshaw, 8 June 1871.

341: Furnivall to Bradshaw, 17 April 1873.

326: Price to Furnivall, 27 February 1873.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1

List of manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales* consulted by Henry Bradshaw, based on his own notes in the Bradshaw papers in King's College, Cambridge and Cambridge University Library:

In the British Museum:
Harley 1239
Harley 1758
Harley 7333
Harley 7334
Harley 7335
Royal 17 D xv
Royal 18 C II
Sloane 1685
Sloane 1686
Lansdowne 851
Additional 5140

In the Bodleian Library, Oxford:
Bodley 686 (2527)
Bodley 414
Laud 739 (1234)
Laud 600 (1476)
Arch. Selden B14
Barlow 20 (6420)
Hatton Donat. 1 (4138)
Rawlinson Poet. 149
Rawlinson Poet. 141
Rawlinson Poet. 223 (Rawl. Misc. 1133)

In New College, Oxford:
New College 314

In Cambridge University Library:
Gg 4.27
Dd 4.24
Ii 3.26
Mm 2.5

In other public libraries:
Glasgow
Paris (probable)[189]

In private hands:
Ellesmere
Hengwrt

Printed editions:
Caxton 1477-8
Wynkyn de Worde 1498

[189] In a letter dated 22 March 1866, Bradshaw writes to Furnivall of a trip to Paris: "Indeed in the MS Department everybody was as friendly and kind as they were grumpy in the Printed book dept". The letter is found in Furnivall 5/1/2, Furnivall Papers, King's College London.

Appendix 2

Transcript from letter 244, Add. 2592, Cambridge University Library:

Proposed plan of an edition of Chaucer's works to be printed at the Oxford press.
Edited by Henry Bradshaw assisted by William Aldis Wright and Walter William Skeat all of Cambridge.

Vol. 1.

Preface, sketching the plan of the edition and enumerating the sources of the text. And a brief critical introduction prefixed to each work, undoubted works with critical notes (various readings) at the foot of the page.

The Deth of Blaunche the Duchesse, 1369.
The Parlement of Foules on seynt Valentynes Day.
Boecius of the Consolation of Philosophy, in five books.

Vol. 2.

Troilus, in five books.
The Hous of Fame, in three books.

Vol. 3.

The unfinished Legende of goode women.
Twelve fragments of the unfinished Canterbury Tales: -
Prologue, Knight's tale, Miller's tale, Reve's tale, Cook's tale.
Man of lawes tale.
Shipman's tale, Prioresses tale, Chaucers Rime of Sir Thopas, Chaucers Tale of Melibee, Monk's tale, Nuns Priest's tale.
? Wyf, Frere, Somenour

Vol. 4.

Twelve fragments of the unfinished Canterbury Tales: -

Wyf of Bathes' tale, Freres tale, Somnours tale.
Clerk's tale.
Merchants tale.
Squyeres tale.
Frankeleyn's tale.
Doctour of Physiks tale, Pardoneres tale.

Seconde Nonnes tale, Chanouns Yemans tale.
Manciple's tale.
Person's tale.
? The unfinished Treatise of the astrolabe, 1391.

Vol. 5.

The unfinished Treatise of the astrolabe, 1391. Begin (?) vol 4
Minor poems: -

Compleynte to Pitee.
Compleynte of Mars.
Compleynte of Anelida.
Balade of stedfastnesse.
Lenvoy to Scogan.
Balade of Fortune or the visage without paynting.
Compleynte to his purse, with Lenvoy to King Henry IV.
Lenvoy to Bukton.
Balade of Truth.
Compleynte of Venus.
Balade of Virtue
To Adam Scriveyne.
Aetas prima
Orison 'O intemerata'.
ABC
Proverbes.

Doubtful works (i.e. Chaucer undoubtedly wrote works which bear these titles, but it is not ascertained that these are the pieces in question) : -
The Rose.
Origenes upon the Maudeleyne.
Small pieces attributed to Chaucer in MSS. of the XVth century, but of questionable authority.

Vol. 6.
Illustrative notes.
Excursus upon special points.
Indices.
Glossary.

N.B. This is not final.
GWP